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DANTE





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### MASK OF DANTE

One of the three given to Baron Kirkup by the sculptor Bartolini

# DANTE

## THE DIVINA COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE

*Translated by the late*

E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.

*Dean of Wells*

WITH NOTES, STUDIES AND ESTIMATES

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

VOL I    HELL





## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*The present edition of Dean Plumptre's elaborately annotated translation of Dante consists of five volumes. The first three contain the "Divina Commedia," which naturally falls into three nearly equal divisions—Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The fourth volume is devoted to the Canzoniere or Minor Poems; and the work is brought to a close with a volume of "Studies."*

*The translation of the "Commedia" is for the most part based on Scartazzini's text (1874-82), with due attention to the various readings that materially affect the sense of the original. In the "Minor Poems" the order and text of Fraticelli's edition (1873) have been followed.*

*With regard to the Terza Rima of the "Commedia" and the metrical forms of the "Canzoniere," the Dean was deeply impressed with the conviction that, in default of absolute identity of form, it is "the duty and the wisdom of a translator to aim at the nearest possible analogue" attainable, and to reproduce, as far as the nature of the English language admits, the structure and recurrence of*

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*rhymes which give sonnet and canzone their distinctive charm.*

*The "Studies," which testify at every turn to the industry, erudition and sympathetic imagination of the writer, place a large accumulation of knowledge at the disposal of the student of Dante, and fitly complete a work, regarding which on its appearance a few years ago the Spectator observed: "No book about Dante has been published in England that will stand comparison with Dean Plumptre's."*

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# HELL

## CANTO I

*The Wild Wood—The Bewildered Traveller—The Mountain  
Delectable—The Three Beasts of Prey—Virgil to the Rescue—  
Prophecy of the Greyhound*

WHEN our life's course with me had halfway sped,  
I found myself in gloomy forest dell,  
Where the straight path beyond all search had fled.  
Ah me ! hard task it were in words to tell  
What was that wood, wild, drear, and tangled o'er, <sup>5</sup>  
Which e'en in thought renews that terror fell !

<sup>1</sup> We are unable to fix with precision the date (probably circ. 1302-3) when Dante first entered on the work of writing the *Commedia*. He has defined with the utmost care the time at which its action opens. He has reached the "halfway" point of the threescore years and ten which he, with the Psalmist (*Ps.* xc. 10), recognised as the normal standard of man's life (*Conv.* iv. 23); and as he was born in A.D. 1265, this brings us to A.D. 1300. The sun is in the sign of Aries (l. 38), the date (March 25), according to mediæval tradition, of the Creation and the Incarnation. And, as we learn later on (*C.* xxi. 112), it was on the morning of Good Friday that the narrative of his experience begins. On that day, at the same age (*Conv. l.c.*), the Christ had died. It was a memorable epoch in the poet's life. In that year (June 15), he was chosen as one of the Priori of Florence, and to that election he looked back as the *fons et origo* of all his after troubles (*Weg.* p. 143). Earlier in the year (*Weg.* p. 140), he had probably been sent on a mission to Boniface VIII., who was then keeping the great Jubilee which he had proclaimed on the Christmas Day of 1299. He was there, it may be, at the very date which he fixes for his vision, and his friend Giotto, and Villani, the future historian of Florence, were with him (*Crowe*, p. 233). When he looked back upon the Easter-tide of that year, it came before him as the great crisis of his life. He had fallen from his "first love" (*Purg.* xxx. 124-141), and was wandering in ways that were not good. Inwardly and outwardly, morally and politically, he was without guidance, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. The melancholy of the Bargello portrait, perhaps painted in this very year, was the outward token of the inward misery and weariness which preyed upon his soul, like that of which we read in *Ecclesiastes* and in *Hamlet*. He has to tell of his deliverance from that evil state. The *Commedia* is for him, as the *Pilgrim's Progress* was afterwards for Bunyan, the history of his conversion. He has also to fulfil the promise, made ten years before, with which the *Vita Nuova* ended, that he would make the name of Beatrice immortal.

<sup>2</sup> The "gloomy forest" (*Purg.* xiv. 64), the "straight path" lost (*Purg.*

So bitter 'tis, death's self were little more;  
 But that the good there found I may display,  
 I'll tell what else 'twas given me to explore.  
 How I there entered, can I not well say, 10  
 So sleep-opprest was I in that same hour  
 When from the true path thus I went astray.  
 But when I reached a point 'bove which did tower  
 A mount, where to its end that valley drew,  
 Which pierced my heart with terror's torturing power,  
 I looked on high, and lo! its slopes to view [<sup>15</sup>  
 Came clothed with brightness from that planet's ray  
 Which for all others ordereth path most true.  
 Then for a while did peace the fear allay  
 That my heart's fountain vexed, nor did relent: 20  
 All the sad night I passed in such dismay,  
 And e'en as one who, panting, worn, and spent,  
 From the deep sea escaping to the shore,  
 Turns to the perilous waves in wonderment,

xxx. 122); was so natural a symbol of the state just described, that it is hardly necessary to look elsewhere for the sources of the imagery. *Prov.* ii. 13-15, 2 *Pet.* ii. 15, may have floated in his mind, or he may have found the thought in the *Tesoretto* of his master, Brunetto Latini (ii. 75). In his own *Convito* (iv. 24) he speaks of life as a *selva erronea*. To him, as to others (the *Autobiography* of J. S. Mill and the *Confessions* of Augustine supply striking parallels, not to speak of St. Paul's recollections of a like state in *Rom.* vii. 23, 24), that state was as "the body of this death," and even to remember it was terrible.

<sup>9</sup> "What else." A *v. l.* gives "what high things."

<sup>10</sup> Self-knowledge had not yet come, as it came afterwards, through the reproofs of Beatrice (*Purg.* xxx. 115-145), to point to the cause, and therefore to the remedy, of the evil. He was as one walking in a dream.

<sup>14</sup> The "mount," afterwards (l. 77) described as the "mount delectable" (we note the unconscious parallelism in Bunyan), can stand for nothing else than the ideal life of holiness, perhaps also the ideal Christian polity, such as we find in the *Mon.*, after which the poet was beginning to aspire. He saw its heights gleaming with the "rose of dawn." Even to contemplate that ideal as afar off brought with it some calm and comfort. The sun, in accordance with the Ptolemaic astronomy, is described as a "planet." Here, of course, it is the symbol of the Sun of Righteousness. God is the spiritual Sun of the Universe (*Par.* xxv. 54; *Conv.* iii. 12), leading men (we note the sad pathos of the "others" as coming from the bewildered pilgrim) on their way (*Purg.* xiii. 16-21).

<sup>22</sup> The first simile in the *Comm.*, like all that follow it, is as far as possible from being a "poetical ornament." It is introduced because it describes a state which no other words could describe half as well. It reminds us in part of the "*suave mari magno* . . ." of Lucretius (i. 1), but there the

So did my soul, that still fled evermore, 25  
 Turn back to gaze upon the scene around,  
 Which never living man had yet passed o'er.  
 When my worn frame awhile had sought the ground,  
 Once more I started through the desert plain,  
 So that the firm foot still was lower found. 30  
 And lo ! just as the sloping side I gain,  
 A leopard supple, lithe, exceeding fleet,  
 Whose skin full many a dusky spot did stain ;  
 Nor did she from before my face retreat,  
 Nay, hindered so my journey on the way, 35  
 That many a time I backward turned my feet.  
 The hour was that of earliest dawn of day ;  
 And with each star the sun on high did ride,  
 Which with him was when Love's divinest sway

tranquillity is that of one who had *not* been struggling with the waves, who had not made shipwreck of his faith, because there was no faith to lose. Here the escape is that of one who has uttered his *De Profundis*. He has passed (the two images blend together) out of the valley of the shadow of death, the abyss from which no "living man" (he speaks of the soul's life, not the body's) had ever been delivered, and looks back with the first consciousness that hope was possible, even in the midst of fears.

<sup>29</sup> Aspirations after the ideal are followed by efforts. He begins, after a short interval of repose, to climb the mountain of holiness.

<sup>32</sup> The three symbolic forms that obstruct the pilgrim's path are those of *Jer.* v. 6. The frequency with which Dante quotes that prophet (*V. N.* c. 29; *Frat. O. M.* iii. 116) seems to indicate a certain attraction of affinity. In temperament, in genius, to some extent in their outward fortunes, the lives of the two men present a strange parallelism. After the manner of mediæval commentaries, starting from Jerome (*Comm. in Jer.* v. 6), the three forms of animal life become types of moral evil—the leopard of the love of sensuous beauty, the lion of pride, the wolf of greed (so *Bocc.*, without noticing others). So in the *Golden Legend* these are the three sins which S. Dominic and S. Francis were raised up to overcome. So Boethius (*B.* iii.), where, however, the swine takes the place of the leopard. Possibly, as a whole school of commentators (Foscolo, Rossetti, and others) have suggested, there may be an underlying political symbolism as well, and the three beasts may stand for Florence, France, and the Papal Curia respectively, as typical representatives of those vices. What Dante calls (*Ep. to Can Grande*) the nature of his poems, "as manifold in meaning," makes a double interpretation probable, and it is perhaps in favour of this view that Jerome (*Comm. in Jer.* v. 6), while accepting the moral allegory, suggests also that the lion is the symbol of the Babylonian monarchy, the wolf of the Medo-Persian, and the leopard of that of Alexander the Great; the spots of the leopard's skin representing the mingled population of the Macedonian monarchy, as to the interpreters above-named they represent the factions that destroyed the peace of Florence.

<sup>39</sup> See note on l. 1.

O'er the first forms of beauty did preside ; 40  
 So that good ground for bright hopes met me here  
 From that fair creature with the spotted hide,  
 The hour of day and season sweet of year ;  
 Yet o'er me, spite of this, did terror creep  
 From aspect of a lion drawing near. 45  
 He seemed as if upon me he would leap,  
 With head upraised and hunger fierce and wild,  
 So that a shudder through the air did sweep ;  
 Then a she-wolf, with all ill greed defiled,  
 Laden with hungry leanness terrible, 50  
 That many nations of their peace beguiled ;  
 And thereupon such sorrow on me fell,  
 With dread that came from that ill-boding sight,  
 That I lost hope to climb that mountain well.  
 And e'en as one who gains with great delight, 55  
 When the time comes that makes him lose his prey,  
 Mourns in each thought, opprest with sore despite,  
 So that fierce beast, who ne'er at rest did stay,  
 Now meeting me, by slow degrees and sure,  
 Thrust me back there where silent is the day. 60  
 And as I fell back to that clime obscure,  
 Before mine eyes there seemed a form to glide,  
 Whose voice, through silence long, seemed hoarse and  
 poor ;

41 The leopard did not alarm the wanderer. The life of sensual enjoyment, the stir of the rejoicing city, if we admit the reference to Florence, blended with the brightness of spring, perhaps with the memories of Holy Week and Easter (*Bocc.*), and gave rise at first to hope. But the hope was transitory. The leopard hindered the pilgrim from climbing the mountain. He sought to resist the temptation by enrolling himself among the followers of S. Francis of Assisi, probably among the Tertiaries (*C.* xvi. 106), but he needed a stronger impulse than any ascetic rules could give him.

49 The lion and the wolf (*comp. Purg.* xx. 10), unlike the leopard, are imply deterrent. Pride and avarice, embodied chiefly in the acts of the powers, France and Rome, that thwart his political aspirations, caused fear, and not hope. The soul gave up the struggle and fell back into the darkness from which it seemed to have escaped.

60 *Comp. Milton, S. A.* 86 :—"The sun to me is dark,  
 And silent is the moon."

Help comes from an unexpected quarter. What Plato had been to



And when I saw him in that desert wide,  
 "Have pity on me" I to him did cry, 65  
 "Whether in thee or man or shade is spied."  
 And he made answer: "Man no more am I:  
 Man I was once; my parents Lombards were,  
 And both to Mantua traced their ancestry;  
*Sub Julio* was I born, though late the year, 70  
 And lived at Rome beneath Augustus good,  
 While false and lying Gods men worshipped there.  
 A poet I, and sang the righteous mood  
 Of great Anchises' son, who came from Troy,  
 When haughty Ilion was by fire subdued. 75  
 But thou, why turn'st thou back to such annoy?  
 Why climb'st thou not yon mount delectable,  
 Which is the source and spring of every joy?"  
 "What! art thou Virgil, thou that springing well  
 Which pours of clear full eloquence the tide?" 80  
 I answered him with looks that reverence tell.  
 "O, of all other bards the light and pride,  
 Let the long study and the love avail  
 Which I to that thy volume have applied.

Justin and Augustine, Virgil was to Dante—a "schoolmaster leading him to Christ." In *Purg.* xii. 3, he applies to him the very term, "pædagogus," of *Gal.* iii. 24. I cannot doubt that we have the record of an actual experience. Virgil was for him more than a *Deus ex machinâ*, the representative of human, as distinguished from divine, wisdom. He had studied him in his youth, had formed his style on his, had drunk in his thoughts as to the greatness of the part assigned to Rome in the divine drama of history. In the vision of Hades in B. vi. of the *Æneid* he found, it need hardly be said, more than in any mediæval legends, visions of Alberic, or S. Patrick's Purgatory, the archetype of the *Commedia*. The "long silence" and the "hoarse voice" may symbolise either the general neglect of the poet's wisdom, or Dante's own temporary disregard of what might have saved him from his fall. To him, at first, the oracles of human wisdom seemed dim and dark. Comp. Milton, *P. L.* vii. 25:—

"With mortal voice unchanged,  
 To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days."

70 *Sub Julio*. Virgil, *b.* B.C. 70, *d.* B.C. 19. Julius Cæsar, *b.* B.C. 100, *d.* B.C. 44. Augustus, *b.* B.C. 63, *d.* A.D. 14. Virgil had, therefore, been for twenty-six years a contemporary of Julius. It is worth noting that Dante had been taught by his master, Latini, to think of Julius as the first Emperor (*Tes.* i. 38).

Thou art my Master, Guide that dost not fail, 85  
 And thou alone art he from whom I drew  
 The goodly style whence comes of praise full tale.  
 Thou see'st the beast that back my footsteps threw ;  
 Give me thine aid against her, famous seer,  
 For she with fear doth vein and pulse imbue." 90  
 "'Tis meet thy steps to other course should veer,"  
 He answered, when he saw me weeping sore,  
 "If thou wilt 'scape this region waste and drear ;  
 For that fell beast, whose spite thou wailest o'er, 95  
 Lets no man onward pass along her way,  
 But so doth hinder that he lives no more,  
 And is of mood so evil, fierce to slay,  
 That never doth she sate her hunger dread,  
 But, when full-gorged, still hungers most for prey.  
 Many the creatures are that with her wed, 100  
 And will be more until the Greyhound come  
 Who with sharp agony shall smite her dead.

87 Dante speaks as one already (in A.D. 1300) held in repute as a writer, probably referring to the *Vita Nuova*, and the *Sonnets and Canzoni*, which belong to the earlier labours of his life ; possibly to the *De Mon.* (Witte), or to Latin poems which have not come down to us, but in which the eclogues that passed between him and Joannes de Virgilio show him to have been an expert. The fact, however, that in *Canz.* 4 he speaks of his own *soave stilo* is proof that he ascribed his mastery over Italian to the study of Virgil's Latin. The "fell beast" that had driven the poet back from the "delectable mountain" was the greed of gain, which he found dominant everywhere, attacking even him, pitiless and insatiable (comp. *Mon.* i. 16; *Conv.* iv. 12).

100 The "greyhound" is the idealised deliverer of Italy. In the *De Mon.* i. 1, Dante dwells on the repression of covetousness as the great work of the true Emperor. Here, however (the passage being probably inserted after the death of Henry VII. in A.D. 1313), the ideal is localised by the two Feltros, the one in Friuli, the other (Montefeltro) in Romagna, to the territory ruled by Can Grande della Scala of Verona, to whom, as vicar of the Empire, the worshipper of the ideal transferred his hopes after Henry's death. In *Par.* xvii. 82-90 he describes his protector in nearly the same terms as those which are here used, "caring not for silver," making the rich poor and the poor rich. By some commentators (Troia) "the greyhound" has been identified (less probably) with the Marquis Ugucione della Faggiuola, a Ghibelline leader, prominent in the movement under Henry VII., to whom the *Inferno* is said to have been dedicated, and for whom two boundaries, Macerata Feltria and Sanleo Feltrio, have been found. The name of Can Grande, it may be noted, probably suggested the symbol of the "greyhound." In the "low Italy" (l. 106) we have an echo of the *humilis Italia* of *Æn.* iii. 522. For the names that follow, see *Æn.* v.



He shall not crave broad lands or pelf at home,  
 But wisdom, virtue, charity shall love,  
 And 'twixt two Feltros shall his subjects roam. 105  
 Of low Italia shall he saviour prove,  
 For which of old the maid Camilla died,  
 Nisus, Euryalus, and Turnus strove.  
 He through each town shall chase her far and wide,  
 Until he drive her back to deepest Hell, 110  
 From whence at Envy's primal hest she hied.  
 Wherefore for thee I think and judge 'tis well  
 That thou should'st follow, I thy leader be,  
 And guide thee hence to that eternal cell,  
 Where thou shalt hear sharp wails of misery, 115  
 Shalt see the ancient spirits in their pain,  
 For which, as being the second death, men cry :

320-360 ; xi. 831 ; xii. 930-952. The width of the work which the greyhound is to accomplish points clearly to a widespread moral evil rather than to the Papal Curia, even if we were to suppose that Dante contemplated Hell as at once the origin and the doom of that Curia. *Bocc.* (i. 61, 114) curiously enough writes as if no one had ever taken "*Feltro*" as the name of a place. With him it is simply a common noun, the "coarse cloth" of the garments of the poor, and he wanders in *omnia alia* of conjectural interpretations, one identifying the deliverer with the Christ born in the stable of Bethlehem. So Guido Pisano (A.D. 1333) asserts that in Spanish "*feltro*" means "arm-pit," and that the words point primarily to the "honest and good heart" as lying between the armpits, and *anagogice*, to Christ and the second advent. Such is the value of primitive tradition in the interpretation of a poet. The name *Can* had taken the place of his original Christian name, Francesco (*Weg.* 295), as embodying a dream in which his mother, before his birth, had had a vision of his future greatness. Possibly, the prominence given by the travels of Marco Polo to the character of Kublai, the great Khan (Ca'an Grande) of Tartary, as an almost ideal king, may have affected Dante's language. Can Grande became a *nomen et omen* in a new sense (*Yule* i. 132, 139).

117 The "second death" is often taken as if it were equivalent to the annihilation for which the damned are supposed to long, and to long in vain. As used, however, in *Rev.* xx. 14, xxi. 8, the phrase has precisely the opposite meaning, and stands for the ultimate doom ; and Dante was too good a theologian to use it in any other sense. His use of the term in his letter to the Florentines (*Weg.* 234 ; *Frat. O. M.* iii. 450) is absolutely decisive on this point. *Rev.* ix. 6 seems at first to support the traditional view, but there the "second death" is not named. On the whole, it seems best to take the word "cry" as simply meaning "bewail," and as referring to the present or future sufferings of the damned (so Boccaccio). On the other hand, a striking coincidence is found in the *Book of Adam*, among the apocrypha of the so-called Christians of St. John at Bassora, where it is written of the damned, "They call on the second death with loud cries, and

Those thou shalt see who, in the hope to gain,  
 When the hour comes, the blest ones' happier clime,  
 Can bear the torturing fire nor yet complain. <sup>120</sup>  
 To these would'st thou with eager footsteps climb,  
 A soul shall guide thee worthier far than I :  
 With her I'll leave thee when to part 'tis time.  
 For that great Emperor who reigns on high,  
 Because I lived a rebel to His will, <sup>125</sup>  
 Wills that through me none come His city nigh.  
 Through all the world He rules, yet there reigns still ;  
 There is His city, there His lofty throne.  
 Thrice blest whom He doth choose those courts to fill ! ”  
 Then spake I, “ By the God thou did'st not own, <sup>130</sup>  
 O Poet, I of thee a boon desire,  
 That I may 'scape this woe, or worse unknown,  
 That whither thou hast said thou lead me higher,  
 So that St. Peter's gate in sight I find,  
 And those thou tell'st of in their torments dire.” <sup>135</sup>  
 Then he moved onward and I trod behind.

the second death is deaf to their prayers” (Migne. *Dict. des Apocr.* i. 122).

<sup>119</sup> As in C. iii. 9, it is the absence or the presence of hope that makes all the difference between Hell and Purgatory. The fiercest pains are endurable, may even be welcomed, if they develop the capacity for blessedness.

<sup>122</sup> The “worthier soul,” as the sequel shows, is Beatrice, glorified and transfigured, so as to be the representative of divine, as Virgil was of human, wisdom.

<sup>124</sup> Readers of the *De Mon.* will appreciate the significance of the use of the word “Emperor” rather than “King,” as representing the sovereignty of God. The earthly Emperor was the type of the heavenly. Compare the use of the same word of the Lord of Hell (C. xxxiv. 28).

<sup>134</sup> “St. Peter's gate.” The entrance, not of Paradise, but Purgatory. Comp. *Purg.* vi. 127, xxi. 54.

117

*The Pilgrim's Doubts—The Three Blessed Ladies in Paradise—  
The Journey Resumed*

THE day was closing, and the dusk-brown air  
 Set free from toil all forms of life that dwell  
 On earth : and all alone did I prepare  
 To bear the brunt of all the conflict fell,  
 As of the way so also of the woe, 5  
 Which now my mind, that errs not, will retell.  
 Ye Muses, help, Thought soaring from below,  
 And Memory, writing all mine eyes did see ;  
 So shall thy greatness yet more nobly show.  
 Then I began : " O Poet guiding me, 10  
 Test well my courage, see if it avail,  
 Ere to that high task I am sent by thee.  
 The sire of Silvius, so thou tell'st the tale,  
 Yet subject to decay, did reach the clime  
 Immortal, nor did sense corporeal fail. 15  
 If, therefore, the great Foe of every crime  
 Was thus benign to him, as knowing well  
 The who, the what,—high end in far-off time,  
 Not unmeet seems it, where wise reasonings dwell,  
 For he of our dear Rome and its great might 20  
 Was chosen sire in Heaven empyreal ;

1-3 An echo of *Æn.* iv. 522-528. The pilgrim, in that dusk of eve, enters, he alone of all that live (Virgil, of course, belongs to another order), on his marvellous journey. The sense of solitariness in his aspirations reminds us of the words said to have been spoken by him when it was proposed that he should go on an embassy to Rome. " If I stay, who is to go? If I go, who is to stay?"

<sup>11</sup> Misgivings, self-distrust, fears, come to Dante, as they have come to other prophets—to Moses (*Exod.* iv. 10), to Isaiah (*Isai.* vi. 5), to Jeremiah (*Jer.* i. 6). The "sire of Silvius" (=Æneas), St. Paul as the "chosen vessel," these had a work to do which justified the withdrawing of the veil of the Unseen. Had he, the citizen of Florence, anything like a similar vocation? *2 Cor.* xii. 4, however, speaks only of St. Paul's vision of Paradise and the third heaven. Was Dante thinking of the *Vision of St. Paul*, a French poem of the 13th century, of the type of the *Vision of Fra Alberigo*, which gives prominence to the sufferings of the lost? (*Ozan.* p. 343.)

<sup>21</sup> The "heaven empyreal" is described in *Conv.* ii. 4 as a region of light and flame, the calm peaceful abode of God and the spirits of the blessed. Comp. Cic. *Somn. Scip.* c. 4, and *Par.* xxx. 52.

But this and that, to speak truth definite,  
 Were fixed and stablished for the Holy See  
 Where the great Peter's Vicar sits of right ;  
 He, in that journey, where he won from thee 25  
 His glory, heard of things from whence did flow  
 The Papal mantle and his Victory.  
 There later did the Chosen Vessel go  
 To bring back comfort for that one true creed  
 Which opes to us salvation from our woe. 30  
 But why should I go? Who will this concede?  
 I nor Æneas am, nor yet am Paul ;  
 Worthy of that nor I myself indeed,  
 Nor others deem me. Wherefore, to this call  
 If now I yield, I fear me lest it be 35  
 A journey vain. Wise art thou ; more than all  
 I speak thou knowest." And behold, as he  
 Who wills and wills not, and by new thoughts tost,  
 Changes his plan, and all his projects flee,  
 So stood I on that dusky hillside lost ; 40  
 For musing still, the work all ran to waste,  
 That at the outset sped its uttermost.  
 "If I have well thy words' true meaning traced,"  
 Then answered me that noble Poet's shade,  
 "Thy soul is now with coward fear disgraced, 45

33 The sensitiveness of the poet mingles with the self-knowledge of the man. He has winced under the criticism which treated him as only a writer of sonnets and the like, and sneered at his claim to take his place among the great poets of mankind, to write of his beloved one what had never yet been written by man or woman (*V. N.* c. 43). So in the *Conv.* (i. 3) he says, not without a touch of bitterness, that he "has seemed vile in the eyes of many" on account of his poverty ; that "every work of his was less prized, both what had been, and *what was to be wrought*." In *C.* iv. 100-102, xxiv. 94-99, we trace the same self-consciousness. He, as a reader of the *Ethics*, had probably learned that the man who is great of soul is one who counts himself worthy, being worthy, of great things (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* iv. 3).

45 The evil to be cured is the self-distrust which draws back from a high vocation. The remedy is found in the consciousness of an election. Others, whom he worships with an adoring love, are watching over him, praying for him. He may have critics and enemies, but "those that are with him are more than they that are against him" (2 *Kings* vi. 16).

Which often hath man's spirit overweighed,  
 So that it turns him from his high emprise,  
 As some false vision makes a beast afraid.  
 That thou from out this fear of thine may'st rise  
 I why I came and what I heard will say. 50  
 When first I looked on thee with pitying eyes,  
 I was among the souls that hang midway;  
 And lo! a Lady called me, blest and fair,  
 So that I asked wherein I might obey.  
 Bright were her eyes beyond the star's compare, 55  
 And she began in accents soft and kind,  
 With voice angelic, such as they speak there:  
 'O Mantuan spirit, thou of courteous mind,  
 Whose fame doth still in yonder world endure,  
 And while the world lasts still its place shall find, 60  
 My friend, not Fortune's, on the slope obscure  
 And desolate is so entangled there,  
 That he through dread turns back from progress  
 sure;

<sup>52</sup> The state of the souls that "hung midway" is described more fully in C. iv. It is characteristic of Dante's tendency to the "larger hope" (for which see again *Par.* xix. 70) that though his theology formally excluded these from the beatific vision for which they perpetually yearned, he yet thinks of them as not shut out from the communion of saints, and capable of higher ministries of service, not without its reward of praise, even than those of angels.

<sup>55</sup> *The star is the Sun (Conv. iii. 5). Comp. Wisd. vii. 29.*

<sup>57</sup> "Such as they speak there." Lit. "in her own language." The words are commonly assumed to mean the Italian of Florence; but the mention of the "angelic voice" justifies the paraphrase. She spoke to Virgil in the dialect of heaven.

<sup>58</sup> "Courteous." Dante's frequent use of the epithet is eminently suggestive as to his own ideal of the manner of a noble nature. It is used again of Virgil (l. 134, iii. 121), of the Angel of Purgatory (*Purg.* ix. 92), of Oderisi (*Purg.* xi. 85), of Thomas Aquinas (*Par.* xii. 111).

<sup>61</sup> The words of Beatrice must be read in combination with those of *Purg.* xxx. 103-145. He who had loved her had proved faithless, had fallen from the ideal with which she had inspired him; but he is still her friend, and the fact that he is not Fortune's friend also gives him a claim on her compassion. To exclude this intensely personal feeling and to see in Beatrice only part of the "machinery" of an epic, the allegorical representative of Theology, is to confess, or at least to prove, oneself incapable of entering into Dante's mind and thinking as he thought.

And much I fear lest he already bear  
     A doom that makes my succour all too late, 65  
     From that which I in Heaven of him did hear.  
 Now rouse thyself, and, with thy speech ornate,  
     And with what skill to free him thou may'st know,  
     Help him, nor leave me thus disconsolate.  
 I Beatrice am who bid thee go; 70  
     I come from clime which to regain I yearn :  
     Love moved me, and from love my speech doth flow.  
 When to my Lord's high presence I return,  
     By me thy praise shall oftentimes be shown.'  
     Then she was silent : I began in turn : 75  
 'O Lady of great virtue, thou alone  
     Dost raise mankind to pass the furthest height  
     Of that bright heaven by lesser circles known ;  
 So much doth thy behest my soul delight,  
     E'en service done, repute of sloth would gain; 80  
     Thou need'st not more thy purpose bring to light,  
 But tell the cause why thou dost not refrain  
     From passing downward to this centre drear  
     From that wide realm thou longest to regain.'  
 'Of what thou seek'st so eagerly to hear,' 85  
     She answered me, 'I briefly now will tell  
     Why I to enter here have felt no fear.

66 In Dante's theology the spirits of the blest know what those of the lost do not know (C. x. 97-108), the things that are passing on the earth, seeing them, as it were, in the mirror of the Divine Omniscience. They are touched with sorrow for those whom they have left below, and are capable of consolation. They can leave Paradise for a while on ministries of mercy, and enter into the abode of the lost without suffering hurt (l. 92). They can bring some increase of comfort even to the souls that are at rest though not in bliss, by reporting to the Supreme King the faithfulness of their service (l. 47).

76 So in *V. N. c.* 10, Beatrice had been described as "the queen of virtue." The "heaven by lesser circles known" is that of the moon (*Par.* ii. 30). Mankind excels all else that is in that "sphere beneath the moon," because there is in its humanity the "promise and potency" of a perfection and a beauty like that of the glorified Beatrice (comp. *Purg.* xxx. 115, and the *Canzone* of *Conv.* ii.) The ideal transfiguration of Beatrice which we find throughout the *Comm.* finds suggestive parallels (1) in Auguste Comte's reverence of Clotilde de Vaux as the perfect type of the Humanity which was the only object of his worship, and (2), on a lower level, in the term which



Of those things only fear in us should dwell  
 Which have the power to work another's woe,  
 Of others none; they are not terrible. 90  
 I by God's bounty have been fashioned so  
 That your great misery leaves me sound and  
 whole,  
 Nor touches me yon fiery furnace' glow.  
 A gentle Lady dwells in heaven whose soul  
 So feels that hindrance whither thee I send, 95  
 That judgment stern on high owns her control.  
 She Lucia called, and bade her to attend,  
 And said, "Thy faithful one is now in need  
 Of thee, and I to thee his cause commend."

Simon Magus is said to have applied to his mistress Helena as the "first great thought" of God (Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 13).

<sup>94</sup> The "gentle lady" is none other than the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of Pity, the symbol of prevalent grace (*Par.* xxxiii. 16), who here, as in *Par.* xxxii. 8, 9, is represented as in company with Beatrice (symbol of Divine Wisdom), and with Rachel (symbol, as in *Purg.* xxvii. 104, of Divine Contemplation), the very "Queen of Heaven." She too had looked with pity on the wanderer (*Weg.* 469). In the *V. N.* (c. 29) Beatrice is said to have been made a sharer, by her death, in the glory of the blessed Queen of Heaven.

<sup>97</sup> The choice of Lucia may be connected, without much risk of error, with Dante's personal history. The martyr-saint of Syracuse, who in the Diocletian persecution had torn out her eyes that her beauty might not minister to man's lust, was much honoured in Florence, and two churches, still standing, were dedicated to her. The story of her death had made her the patron-saint of all who suffered from diseases of the eye, and Dante (*V. N.* c. 40; *Conv.* iii. 9) was at one time threatened with blindness. *Ex voto* offerings of silver eyes are still seen in her churches. It was natural that he, after the manner of his time, should look to her as having healed him, as natural as that the outward should become the symbol of an inward healing; all the more so when her very name brought with it the promise of illumination. Another S. Lucia of the convent of S. Clara at Florence, and of the Ubaldini family, who lived in the 13th century, has been suggested (*Scart.*) as the one that Dante may have had in view. As both churches are dedicated to Lucia of Syracuse, I incline to the earlier of the two. Witte, however (*D. F.* ii. 30), finds that the later Lucia's festival in the calendars of Florence was May 30, and conjectures that this may have been Dante's birthday (May was certainly the month of his birth, *C.* xv. 55; *Par.* xxii. 112), and that she was therefore chosen by him as his patroness-saint. It is curious that in *Conv.* iii. 5, Maria and Lucia appear as the names of two imaginary cities chosen to illustrate the theory of the spherical form of the earth. It would be no strange thing in hagiology for the attributes of the earlier to have been transferred to the later saint. Lucia appears again in *Purg.* ix. 55; *Par.* xxxii. 137.

And Lucia, foe of each un pitying deed, 100  
 Hastened, and thither came where with me stays  
 Rachel, of whom in story old we read,  
 And said "O Beatrice, God's true praise,  
 Why help'st thou not the man that loves thee so,  
 That he for thy sake left the vile herd's ways?" 105  
 Dost thou not hear his piteous plaint of woe?  
 Dost thou not see the death he has to face,  
 Where floods that shame the stormiest sea's boast flow?"  
 Ne'er in the world went men at such swift pace 110  
 Their good to gain, or from their loss retreat,  
 As I, when I had heard such words of grace,  
 Did take the downward path from my blest seat,  
 In thy fair speech confiding, which brings praise  
 To thee and those who listen at thy feet.'  
 And when her tale she ended, then her gaze 115  
 She turned, her bright eyes wet with many a tear,  
 And so she made me come without delays.  
 And I, as she desired me, sought thee here;  
 I made thee from before that fierce beast rise,  
 Which stopped quick climbing up yon mountain fair. 120  
 What ails thee then? why, why halt, lingering-wise?  
 Why doth such baseness in thine heart find place?  
 Why hast thou not bold zeal for high emprise,  
 Since three such ladies, blest of God's dear grace,  
 Care for thee in that heavenly company, 125  
 And in my speech such promise thou may'st trace?"

103 The name by which Lucia addresses Beatrice is as an echo of the *V. N.* c. 26. Men exclaimed, as they saw in her the ideal of humanity, "Blessed be the Lord, who knoweth to work so wondrously." Line 105 epitomises the whole story of the *V. N.* It was through his love for Beatrice that the poet's life became unlike that of others, with different aims and with a soul that dwelt apart.

107 What had been a similitude in *C. i.* 22 is presented more objectively. The poet had been in the great depths and the floods had gone over him. Prosaic commentators have, after their manner, identified the "flood" with Acheron, which is not reached till *C. iii.* 78.

119 The fierce beast is the wolf, not the leopard, of *C. i.* It may be worth while noting, as we part from the symbolism, that the *lonza* of the original has been variously rendered as "leopard," "panther," "ounce," or "lynx."



E'en as the flowers, beneath the night's cold sky  
 Bent down and closed, when sunrise makes them white,  
 With open blossoms lift their stalks on high,  
 So did I then with my half-vanished might; 130  
 And such good courage rose within my heart  
 That I began, as freed from all affright :  
 "O gracious she who did the helper's part,  
 And courteous thou who did'st so soon obey  
 The words of truth she did to thee impart : 135  
 Thou to my heart such yearning dost convey,  
 With those thy words, to journey on again,  
 That I once more by my first purpose stay.  
 On then ; one only will is in us twain ;  
 Thou Leader art, thou Lord, and thou my Guide." 140  
 So spake I ; and when he moved on, again  
 I too that pathway wild and dreary tried.

## CANTO III

*The Gate of Hell—The Company of the Neutrals—Charon and  
 his Passengers*

"THROUGH me men pass to city of great woe ;  
 Through me men pass to endless misery ;  
 Through me men pass where all the lost ones go.

127 The simile calls for notice—(1) as the first example of the exquisite vividness and tenderness with which Dante looked on the phenomena of nature ; (2) as an example of the *ne plus ultra* of fantastic exposition. The flowers, according to Rossetti (*Spir. Ant. Pap.* p. 392) become white, and are therefore a parable of the poet's conversion from the Guelphism of the Neri of Florence to the Ghibellinism of the later Bianchi. Dean Church's language is hardly too strong when he says of this system of interpretation that it solves the enigma of Dante's works by imagining for him "a character in which it is hard to say which predominates, the pedant, the mountebank, or the infidel" (*Dante*, p. 84).

139 In his new-born courage the pilgrim follows his leader without reserve, and the guidance continues till, in *Purg.* xxx. 55, Beatrice takes the place of Virgil.

1-9 The inscription on the gate of Hell embodies the root principle of

Justice it was that moved my Maker high,  
 The Power of God it was that fashioned me, 5  
 Wisdom supreme and primal Charity.  
 Before me nothing was of things that be,  
 Save the eterne, and I eterne endure :  
 Ye that pass in, all hope abandon ye."  
 These words I saw, in characters obscure, 10  
 Enwritten o'er the summit of a gate.  
 "Master, their cruel drift is but too sure,"  
 I said : he skilled my thoughts to penetrate :  
 "Here it is meet thou leave all doubt behind ;  
 'Tis meet that thou all baseness extirpate. 15  
 We to the place have come where thou wilt find,  
 E'en as I said, the people sorrow-fraught,  
 Those who have lost the Good supreme of  
 mind."

Dante's eschatology, based as that was on the teaching of Aquinas. Hell is the "city" of the lost (the range of the word is wider than that of the "city of Dis" in C. viii. 68, which is but a part of Hell), as Heaven, the New Jerusalem, is the city of the great King (C. i. 128). The misery of the lost is eternal in the sense of "endless." Its existence is not only consistent with, but is conditioned by, the Divine love, which, without it, would be transformed to a weak and aimless indifference to evil. In its formation the three Persons of the Trinity, each with His characteristic attribute, the Omnipotence of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, the Love of the Eternal Spirit, had co-operated. The time of its creation was fixed as after that of the rebel angels, possibly after their fall (comp. *Matt.* xxv. 41), who are classified as among the "things eternal" in the sense of everlasting. Its last and most terrible feature is that it excludes hope. Those last words seem to have perplexed and alarmed the pilgrim. Could he enter through the gate and yet retain his hope of better things? See C. viii. 126 for a further history of the gate. Commentators have discussed the question where the gate was supposed to stand, some arguing for the cove near Avernus, as in *Æn.* vi., some for the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as being the Antipodes of the Mount of Purgatory. The debate seems a somewhat profitless one. Dante, at all events, did not care to furnish *data* for its decision.

<sup>13</sup> The answer of his guide removes the poet's doubt. His faith in the three heavenly ladies, in God Himself, ought to have taught him that no powers of the gates of Hell should prevail against one who was under such protection.

<sup>18</sup> The "supreme good of mind" is the intuition of God as the Truth that alone can satisfy its cravings (comp. *Conv.* i. 2, ii. 14). That was, as it were, the first axiom of theology, as in *John* xvii. 3, finding expression in all the great masters of that science, in Origen, and Clement of Alexandria, in Augustine and Aquinas. Comp. *Arist. de An.* c. 3.

Then me, his hand firm clasped in mine, he brought,  
 With joyful face that gave me comfort great, 20  
 Within the range of things in secret wrought.

There sighs and tears and groans disconsolate  
 So sounded through the starless firmament,  
 That at the outset I wept sore thereat.

Speech many-tongued and cries of dire lament, 25  
 Words full of wrath and accents of despair,  
 Deep voices hoarse and hands where woe found  
 vent,—

These made a tumult whirling through the air,  
 For evermore, in timeless gloom the same,  
 As whirls the sand storm-driven here and there. 30

And I, upon whose brain strange wildness came,  
 Said, "Master, what is this that now I hear,  
 And who that race whom torment so doth tame?"

And he to me: "This wretched doom they bear,  
 The sorrow-smitten souls of those whose name 35  
 Nor foul reproach nor glorious praise did share.

<sup>19</sup> The "clasped hand" tells of an experience which had felt the power of that sacrament of human help. One wonders that no master of spiritual therapeutics has written at least an essay on the evangelising power of the hand as distinguished from the voice. In this case it brought, as by a mesmeric influence, to the perplexed mind of the pilgrim something of the serener joy with which his more experienced guide had learnt to look even on the most terrible manifestations of the Divine righteousness. Human pity, however, was not extinct, and "at first" he wept. At the outset, as throughout, Virgil is, as it were, the Mentor, the higher self, of the poet; no longer the classical poet of the age of Augustus, but Christianised, mediævalised, scholasticised, interested in the questions and politics of Italy in the 13th century (*Faur.* i. 440).

<sup>34</sup> Foremost and most numerous among the lost, Dante, with all the thoroughness of a strong nature, places those who had been content to remain neutral in the great contest between good and evil. Among these he may have recognised chiefly, it may be, many with whom he had been associated at Florence,—the "White" Guelphs, the party headed by Vieri dei Cerchi, the *nouveaux riches* of the city, who lacked the evil strength of the "Black" Guelphs that followed Corso Donati, and were content to take life easily and to let slip opportunities for good (*Dino*, 45; *Church*, 45). There is, of course, no real contrast between this feeling and Dante's boast that he attached himself to neither of the two contending factions of his time, but formed a party by himself (*Par.* xvii. 69). There the question is between two forms of evil; here between evil and good; and therefore the saying, "He that is not with us is against us" (*Matt.* xii. 30), holds good in its fulness.

Mingled are they with those of evil fame,  
 The angels who nor rebels were, nor true  
 To God, but dwelt in isolated shame.  
 Heaven, fearing loss of beauty, spurned that crew ; 40  
 Nor were they harboured in the depths of Hell,  
 Lest to the damned some glory might accrue."  
 And I : " O Master, what doom terrible  
 Makes them lament with such a bitter cry ?"  
 And he : " Full briefly I the cause will tell. 45  
 No hope have these that they shall ever die,  
 And this blind life of theirs so base is shown,  
 All other doom they view with envious eye.  
 Their fame the world above leaves all unknown ;  
 Mercy and Justice look on them with scorn. 50  
 Talk not of them ; one glance, and then pass on."  
 And as I looked I saw a standard borne,  
 Which whirling moved with such a rapid flight,  
 It seemed to me all thought of rest to spurn ;  
 And in its rear a long train came in sight, 55  
 Of people, so that scarce I held it true  
 Death had undone such legions infinite.

<sup>37</sup> *Lib.* refers vaguely to Clement of Alexandria as the authority for these neutral angels who waited to see the issue of the conflict, but I have not succeeded in finding the passage. Aquinas makes no mention of them.

<sup>42</sup> I have taken *alcuna* in its more ordinary sense, which seems to give an adequate meaning. The neutrals were not received into Hell, for those that were there would have had the glory of exulting in the doom of those whose weakness had brought them to the same wretchedness as their own more active evil (see C. xii. 9). The other rendering, in which *alcuna* is taken as "none,"—"For glory none the damned would have from them,"—seems to imply that the damned could choose their company.

<sup>46</sup> It is characteristic that Dante sees in the total loss of fame in the world which the neutrals have left a heavier doom than the torments suffered by those whose name is still remembered, whether for good or evil, in that world. The "last infirmity of noble minds" exists even in the damned. Comp. C. xiii. 77, xv. 120, and throughout the *Inferno*.

<sup>52</sup> The punishment is clearly symbolic. The sin of the coward neutrals was that they had followed public opinion, the cries and banners of the majority. Now they are condemned to follow such a banner through all the vicissitudes of its ever changing vacillations. That is the righteous doom of the *auræ popularis captator*.

And when among the crowd some forms I knew,  
 I looked, and lo ! I saw his spectre there  
 Who basely from his calling high withdrew. 60  
 Forthwith I understood and saw full clear,  
 These were the souls of all the caitiff host  
 Who neither God nor yet His foes could bear.  
 These wretched slaves, who ne'er true life could boast,  
 Were naked all, and, in full evil case, 65  
 By gnats and wasps were stung that filled that coast ;  
 And streams of blood down-trickled on each face,  
 And, mingled with their tears, beneath their feet,  
 Were licked by worms that wriggled foul and base.  
 And when I further looked on that drear seat, 70  
 On a great river's bank a troop I saw,  
 Wherefore I said, " O Master, I entreat

<sup>60</sup> In accordance with the law implied in l. 49, the man who made *il gran rifiuto* is not even named, and hence there is a wide field for conjecture. Esau, who sold his birthright (*Heb.* xii. 16), Diocletian, the young ruler who had great possessions (*Matt.* xix. 22), Vieri, or Torrigiano, dei Cerchi (see above on l. 34, and *Faur.* i. 177), who at some political crisis deserted his party, have been suggested by different commentators. On the whole, however, the earliest tradition, given by Boccaccio (*Comm. in loc.*), is probably the truest. Piero da Morrone, who had led a hermit's life in the mountain of that name in the Abruzzi, was elected Pope at Perugia in 1294, and took the name of Celestine V., was persuaded by Cardinal Benedetto Gaetani that it was against his soul's health to retain the pomp and power of the Papacy, and solemnly resigned his office, Gaetano being chosen as his successor as Boniface VIII. By some the act was looked on as an act of supreme saintliness, and under John XXII. (1310-15) Celestine was canonised and his praises were celebrated by Petrarch (*De Vit. Solit.*). It was not strange, however, that Dante, writing prior to the canonisation, and tracing all his own misfortunes and those of his country to the evil influence of Boniface, should take a different view, and see in that withdrawal from a high calling and election the act of a nature weak and therefore miserable, caring more for ease and quiet than for duty. See Milman's *Lat. Chris.* vi. 456-465; Gower, *Conf. Am.* ii. *Serrav.*, as a good Franciscan, argues vehemently against the Celestine theory, and refers the *gran rifiuto* to Esau. *Gui. Pis.*, and *Castelv.* agree in referring the passage to Celestine, but urge on Dante's behalf that he wrote before the Church had given her judgment on his abdication.

<sup>65</sup> The penalty is again appropriate. Those who had never clothed themselves with righteousness were left naked. Those who had shrunk from the stinging reproaches of men were now exposed defenceless to the stings of gnats and wasps. The "tears" of their unavailing remorse expose them to yet further shame. Is not this in its turn a parable of the doom that falls on the trimmers and the waverers even on earth?

<sup>71</sup> The "great river" is Acheron, the stream of lamentations. The "law" which leads the souls thither is set forth in l. 121-127.

That I may know who these are, what the law  
 Which makes them seem so eager to pass o'er ;  
 As through the dim light they my notice draw." 75  
 And he to me : " Of this thou shalt know more,  
 When we our footsteps on the pathway set 76  
 That runs by Acheron's melancholy shore."  
 And then, with eyes where shame and awe were met,  
 For fear lest he my words displeased should mark, 80  
 Till we the river reached I spake not yet.  
 And then behold ! toward us came a bark,  
 Bearing an old man, white with hoary age,  
 And saying, " Woe to you, ye spirits dark ;  
 Hope never ye to see Heaven's heritage : 85  
 I come to take you to the other coast,  
 Eternal gloom, and heat, and winter's rage.  
 And thou, who standest there, thou living ghost,  
 Withdraw thyself from these who come as dead."  
 But when he saw I did not leave that host, 90  
 " By other ways, by other ports," he said,  
 " Thou wilt that region reach, not here : received  
 In lighter bark than mine thou shalt be led."  
 Then spake my Leader : " Charon, be not grieved ;  
 This is there willed where Will and Power are one, 95  
 Nor question what should be at once believed."  
 Then quiet were those cheeks, with beard o'ergrown,  
 Of that old pilot of the livid lake,  
 Around whose eyes two fiery circles shone.

83 The picture of the grim ferryman of Hell is, as it were, a *replica* of that in *Æn.* vi. 299-301. Here, as elsewhere, Christian and classical mythology were mingled without scruple. The introduction of Charon in Michael Angelo's Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel is probably not an unconscious parallelism, but a direct reproduction of the thought of Dante. That artist was a devout student of Dante, wrote sonnets in his honour, and is said to have illustrated the whole of the *Comm.* in sketches that were lost at sea. See *D. Gesell.* ii. 211-225.

91 The "other ports" are in *Purg.* ii. 101 identified with the mouth of the Tiber, to which, in the strange belief of the time, the souls that were admitted to Purgatory flitted after death. Charon's refusal rests (1) on the ground that Dante is not dead, (2) on the fact that Hell is not his doom.



But those poor souls, whose naked forms did quake, <sup>100</sup>  
 Changed colour when they heard his accents hoarse,  
 And gnashed their teeth, and then blaspheming  
 spake

God and kith and kin their bitter curse,  
 Mankind, the place, the time, the evil lot  
 Of their engendering, and their birth perverse. <sup>105</sup>

Then drew they all together to one spot,  
 With bitter weeping, on that dreary shore,  
 Which waits each soul where fear of God dwells not.  
 And Charon, fiend with eyes that flamed all o'er,  
 With signs and nods around him gathers all, <sup>110</sup>  
 And strikes each lingering spirit with his oar.

And as in autumn time the sere leaves fall,  
 Each after other, till the branch, left bare,  
 Yields to the earth its spoils funereal,  
 In like wise Adam's evil offspring fare. <sup>115</sup>

They from that shore leap, beckoned, one by one,  
 As hawk that at its lure swoops down through air.  
 So they o'er those dark waters swift are gone,  
 And ere o' the further side they disembark,  
 On this another troop together run. <sup>120</sup>

"My son," my kind guide's accents bade me hark,  
 "Those who beneath the wrath of God have died,  
 From all lands gather to this region dark,

<sup>112</sup> Another echo from Virgil (*Æn.* vi. 309):

"Quam multa in silvis auctumni frigore primo  
 Lapsa cadunt folia."

A *v. l.* in l. 114 gives "sees on the earth."

<sup>117</sup> The first of a long series of similitudes from the art of falconry, in which we may well believe the poet, as an expert, watched his birds, in their varying moods and acts, with a sympathetic insight (*C.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130; *Purg.* xiii. 70, xix. 64; *Par.* xix. 64).

<sup>121</sup> The lines that follow give the "law" promised in l. 76, and it is one of profound ethical significance. The doom of the souls that die in the wrath of God (*sc.* in utter impenitence) cannot be altered; but they acknowledge that doom to be just. Fear vanishes with hope, and turns into desire. They seek to know the worst, and meet their punishment, some with blasphemies (l. 102) and defiance (*C.* xiv. 63, xxiv. 3), some with the calmness of resignation (*C.* v. 88-93). Comp. *Faur.* i. 431.

And eager are to pass across the tide ;  
 For God's stern justice so doth urge them on, 125  
 That fear becomes desire unsatisfied :  
 But never passeth here a guiltless one.  
 If, therefore, Charon vex his soul for thee,  
 What his words mean will now to thee be known."  
 So ended he, then shook exceedingly 130  
 That gloomy region, so that still my fear  
 Bathes me with sweat, though but in memory :  
 The tearful land sent forth a blast of air,  
 Whence there flashed forth as lightning's vermeillight,  
 Which not one organ of my sense did spare : 135  
 I fell as one whom slumber robs of sight.

## CANTO IV

*The First Circle—The Limbo of Infants—The Dwellers in the  
 Elysian Fields*

THERE came to break that deep sleep of the brain  
 A peal of thunder loud, that startled me  
 As one whom force doth to awake constrain.  
 And with mine eyes thus rested, I to see  
 Turned me, stood up, and steadfast gazed around, 5  
 To know the region where I chanced to be.  
 In very deed upon the brink I found  
 Myself, of that abyss of direst woe,  
 Where thunders roar, of groans that know no bound.

<sup>130</sup> Are the earthquake and the thunder and the flash and the sleep to be looked on as a poetical device to evade the difficulty as to passing Acheron in Charon's boat, or may we think of them as entering, without volition, as men dream of thunder, into Dante's vision? Anyhow he leaves the tale of his passage over the river untold. The story of *Purg.* ix. 10-60 suggests the thought of a journey like Ezekiel's, in "the visions of God" (*Ezek.* viii. 3).

<sup>7</sup> Acheron has been passed, how we are not told. As in *Rev.* xi. 19, "lightnings and thunders and voices" are the prelude of the Apocalypse. The seer stands at the mouth of the great pit which he is to descend through its ever narrowing circles and varied scenery till he reaches the centre of the



Dark was it, deep, o'erclouded so below, 10  
 That though I sought its depths to penetrate,  
 Nought to mine eyes its form did clearly show.  
 "Now pass we down to that world desolate,"  
 Began the poet, pale with sore affright :  
 "I will go first ; thou shalt as second wait." 15  
 And I, who had that change of hue in sight,  
 Said, "How shall I go, if e'en thou dost fear,  
 Whose wont it is my doubting to set right ?"  
 And he to me : "Their anguish who dwell there  
 My face with pity's pallor overspread, 20  
 Which to thy thought as terror did appear.  
 Onward, for long the way we have to tread."  
 And so he passed, and made me enter in  
 Where the first circle girds the abyss of dread.  
 And here, so far as hearing truth might win, 25  
 No other plaint rose up than that of sighs,  
 That made the air all tremulous within.  
 This from the sorrow without pain did rise,  
 Endured by those vast multitudes and great,  
 Which infants, men, and women did comprise. 30

earth. Where, on what spot on earth, the descent begins, we are not told. Canto xxxiv. 115 seems to suggest a valley near Jerusalem, possibly that of Jehoshaphat (C. x. 11). The nearest approach to measurement is in the tenth Bolgia, which is described as having a circuit of twenty-two miles (C. xxix. 9, xxx. 86). Commentators (Velutelli), in whom the surveyor temperament predominated, have given the diameters of each circle as varying from 280 miles in the first to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in the lowest (*N. Q.* 4th *S. I.*, 607).

21 The emotions caused by the torments of the lost seem to vary with their character. Here, entering on his own region, to which he and his friends were doomed, there is a "pity" that pales Virgil's face as if with fear. In presence of more virulent evil, pity and piety become incompatible (C. xx. 28).

25-42 The state described is that of the *levissima damnatio*, which Augustine (*c. Julian.* v. 44) assigns to unbaptized infants, and which Dante extends to the heathen who have sought righteousness. There is no pain, but neither is there hope for the beatific vision, which the soul desires in vain. Comp. *Purg.* vii. 25-36. Dante accepts the dogma of his Church, but here, as in *Par.* xix. 70-78, not without the wish that he could believe otherwise. He has to crush the instinctive questionings of what we feel to have been his truer nature. MSS. and *Serrav.*'s Latin version are in favour of the reading *parte* in l. 37, but *porta* gives a far preferable meaning. So *Lub.*

Spake my good Master : " Ask'st thou not their fate,  
 Who are these spirits that thus meet thy view ?  
 Ere thou pass on I will thou know their state,  
 That they sinned not ; if they have merits too,  
 These, baptism lacking, nothing help alone, 35  
 The portal this of Faith thou holdest true.  
 And if they lived ere Christian creed was known,  
 They did not in due measure God adore ;  
 And of this number I myself am one :  
 Through these defects, not other guilt or more, 40  
 We are among the lost, but so far pained,  
 That without hope we live in yearning sore."  
 When I heard this, great grief my heart constrained  
 Because some persons good and brave I knew,  
 Who in that outer *limbus* were detained. 45  
 " Tell me, O Lord and Master, tell me true,"  
 So I begin in eager wish to know  
 The faith which every error doth subdue,  
 " Did ever any by his merits go,  
 Or by another's, hence, and then was blest ? " 50  
 And he, who knew what lay my speech below,

<sup>45</sup> The term *limbus* (literally *fringe*, the borderland between pain and peace) had become technical in the mediæval eschatology. Milton uses it in his "limbo of vanities," and it survives in the popular phrase *in limbo*.

<sup>49-69</sup> The question is answered from the Catholic doctrine of the "descent into Hades," the "preaching to the spirits in prison" (1 *Pet.* iii. 19), as interpreted by the Gospel of Nicodemus. (See the *Study on the Descent into Hell* in the writer's *Spirits in Prison*.) Dante follows the current view that the purpose of the descent was to deliver the patriarchs of the Old Testament from their imprisonment and transport them to Paradise. The epithet "loyal" or "obedient" belongs to Moses (*Heb.* iii. 5), and not to Abraham, as Longfellow takes it. Rachael, as the type of heavenly contemplation (*C. ii.* 202 ; *Purg.* xxvii. 104 ; *Par.* xxxii. 8), is named, while Sarah and Rebecca and Leah are passed over. In the "Mighty One" of l. 53 we have an instance of the reverence which leads the poet, while in Hell, to avoid uttering the name of the Christ. Other traces of the Gospel of Nicodemus are found in *C. viii.* 125. The statement of l. 62 is that embodied in the *Te Deum*, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers." In l. 69 I follow Lombardi in the rendering *vincia* (from the Lat. *vincire*) as "girt" rather than "conquered," as most translators and commentators take it. The symbolism seems to be that the wise and good among the heathen were as lights shining in the darkness.

Made answer : " I was but a new-come guest,  
When here I saw a Mighty One descend,  
And on His brow the conqueror's crown did rest ;  
He bade our first sire's spirit with him wend, 55  
Abel, his son, and Noah too did bring,  
Moses, lawgiver, loyal to the end,  
Abraham the Patriarch, David, too, the king,  
Israel, with all his children, and his sire,  
Rachel, for whom he bore such suffering, 60  
And others, whom He placed in Heaven's blest choir ;  
And thou shouldst know that human spirits none  
Gained before these salvation's joy entire."  
Not for his speaking ceased we to pass on,  
But tracked the pathway through the forest dense, — 65  
Forest, I say, of thick trees, souls each one.  
Not long had we our journey made from thence,  
This side the pit's mouth, when I saw a flame,  
Which girt a hemisphere of gloom intense.  
Some distance were we still when that sight came, 70  
Yet not so far but I discerned in part  
That those who dwelt there were of honoured fame.  
"Thou, who dost honour knowledge and each art,  
Say who are these that in such honour dwell,  
It sets them from the others' ways apart ?" 75  
And he to me : " That fair fame, honoured well,  
Which in thy life above there thou dost know,  
Wins grace in Heaven which makes them thus  
excel."  
Meantime a voice I heard which sounded so :  
" Give honour to the poet loftiest ; 80  
His shade returns, that left short while ago."  
After the voice was silent and at rest,  
Four mighty shades I saw towards me move,  
With looks that showed as neither pained nor blest.

72-80 We note the emphasis of the fourfold iteration of the thought and syllables of "honour."

Then spake to me the Master whom I love : 85  
 "Look thou on him who walks with sword in hand,  
 Whose place before the three his rank doth prove :  
 See Homer, sovran poet of our band :  
 Horace comes next, for biting satire known ;  
 Ovid the third, and Lucan last doth stand. 90  
 Because with me they all are so far one,  
 Sharing the name that one voice uttered clear,  
 They do me honour ; well that deed is done."  
 Thus saw I round that lord whom all revere,  
 Lord of high song, that goodly company, 95  
 While he o'er others soared like eagle there.  
 And when in converse some short time passed by,  
 'They to me turned with sign of greeting kind,  
 And he, my Master, smiled as pleased thereby.

85-90 The list is significant as showing whom Dante recognised as the great poets of the world. (1) Homer he knew possibly only at second hand, as in the quotations given in the translation of Aristotle (*Conv.* iv. 20), or by repute. There is no evidence that he had studied him as he had studied Virgil. Homer was translated into Latin at the request of Petrarch or Boccaccio by Leontius of Calabria, but an earlier version, ascribed to a Pindar of Thebes, was current before Dante's time (*Qu. Rev.* xxi. 512), though *Conv.* i. 7 shows that he did not know it. On the other hand, it may be noted that he at least knew a "little Greek," and could discuss etymologies (*Conv.* ii. 3, iii. 11, iv. 1), and C. xxvi. 90-142 implies an acquaintance with at least the story of the *Odyssey*. The passages usually cited as showing that he knew no Greek (*Conv.* i. 7, ii. 15) do not prove it. In fact, the former tends the other way. A critic who could say that the Psalms lost their beauty in passing from Hebrew into Greek must have had some knowledge of both languages. (2) The prose works of Dante supply many quotations from Horace (*Conv. passim*), but I do not remember any traces of him in the *Commedia*. (3) Ovid is frequently quoted in the *Conv.* (ii. 6, iv. 27, and in the *Comm.*), and in the transformation scene of C. xxv. Dante distinctly challenges a comparison with the *Metamorphoses*. (4) Lucan seems to have been almost as much studied as Virgil, probably because the subject of the *Pharsalia*, like that of the *Æneid*, fell in with his theories as to the Divine vocation of the Roman people and its empire. With him also Dante challenges comparison in C. xxv., and quotations abound both in the *Comm.* and *Conv.* Statius, also among the poet's best loved authors, is, for a special reason, placed not here, but in Purgatory (*Purg.* xxi. 10, 89, *et al.*).

92 The "one voice" was that which came simultaneously from the lips of the four poets.

95 It has been questioned whether the words apply to Virgil or Homer. The latter seems the more probable. A *v. l.* gives the plural, "of those lords."

And yet more honour they to me assigned, 100  
 For they with me their lofty rank did share,  
 And I was sixth amid that might of mind.  
 So did we onward to the bright light fare,  
 Speaking of things it is as good to keep  
 In silence, as to speak was then and there. 105  
 We came where nobly rose a fortress steep,  
 Which seven high walls encircled as a screen,  
 Guarded by streamlet flowing fair and deep.  
 O'er this we passed as it firm ground had been,  
 And with these sages I through seven gates went. 110  
 We reached a field where all was fresh and green ;  
 A tribe was there with eyes sad, grave, down-bent,  
 And power to rule was on their faces traced ;  
 Seldom they spoke, grave voice with sweetness blent.  
 So moving on one side, our feet we placed 115  
 On open ground, high, full of light and clear,  
 And all were seen who that fair region graced.

<sup>102</sup> Literature hardly records an instance of such supreme self-confidence. Approximate parallels are, however, found in Bacon's committing his fame "to the care of future ages," and in Milton's belief that he could write what "the world would not willingly let die." The world has, however, set its seal on Dante's judgment of himself, and placed him not only with that goodly company, but among the "first three" of the true Israel of poets. We remember once more that the "Master of those who know" had defined the "great soul" as one that counted itself worthy of great things being worthy (*Eth. Nicom.* iv. 3). In *Purg.* xxii. 97-108 we have the names of others—Euripides, Simonides, Plautus, Terence—who were at least among the "chief thirty," but Æschylus and Sophocles are not even named. Except as mentioned by Latin writers they were, of course, unknown to Dante.

<sup>104</sup> The poet's reticence has its parallel in 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. Here also there were things which it "was not lawful," was not possible, "for a man to utter." May we think of the calling of the poet, and the conditions of excellence in it, and the mysteries of Nature and of history, as among the things that were in Dante's mind?

<sup>107</sup> The seven walls, each with its separate gate, may represent the *Trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialect) and *Quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy) of mediæval education, but I do not feel sure that the symbolism is more definite than that of the "seven pillars" of the house of Wisdom in *Prov.* ix. 1.

<sup>113</sup> The description falls in with the report which others give of Dante's own demeanour as cold, stern, reticent (*Bocc. V. D.*; *Vill.* ix. 136), and his hatred, like Bishop Butler's, of people who "will be talking." Laughter and jests he left (as in the story of his reply to Can Grande) to the buffoons in whom princes delighted, on the principle that like loves like.

There straight before me, lo! the forms appear,  
 On the enamelled green, of spirits wise,  
 Whom to have seen makes me myself revere. 120  
 I saw Electra with her brave allies;  
 Hector and brave Æneas there I knew;  
 Cæsar, all armed, with clear and falcon eyes;  
 Pentesilea and Camilla too  
 I saw, and with them Latium's ancient king, 125  
 Who with his child Lavinia sat in view.  
 Brutus I saw, who Tarquin low did bring,  
 Cornelia, Marcia, Julia, Lucrece, nigh,  
 And, all alone, Saladin wandering.  
 When I to gaze a little raised mine eye, 130  
 The Master I beheld of those that know,  
 Sit 'midst his wisdom-loving family;

121-130 With the exception of Saladin, every name is connected with Rome and with Troy, as the stock from which the Romans sprung. Electra is the daughter of Atlas and mother of Dardanus (*Æn.* viii. 134; *De Mon.* ii. 3). The "falcon eyes" of Cæsar came from Suetonius ("*nigris vegetisque oculis*," *Jul. Cæs.* c. 45). For Camilla see note on C. i. 107. Pentesilæa is the Queen of the Amazons who fought on the side of Troy (*Æn.* xi. 659-663). Lucretia is naturally associated with Brutus. Marcia is there but not her husband Cato, whom we meet with afterwards as the warden of the Mount of Purgatory (*Purg.* i. 31), and whose heroic character Dante may have learnt to admire from Lucan. Saladin, apart from these, as belonging to a different race and faith, is named in *Conv.* iv. 11 as distinguished for his kindly liberality.

131-145 The list of writers that follows, like that of heroes that precedes, throws light on Dante's preferences as a student. We may feel sure that he had known, at first or second hand, the sages whom he quotes. The "Master of those who know" is, of course, Aristotle, of whom he speaks in *Conv.* i. 1 as *the* philosopher, in *Conv.* iv. 2 as "worthy of honour and obedience," and whose works (translated into Latin from Arabic translations) were the basis of the scholastic philosophy of the 13th century, as represented by Roger Bacon and Aquinas. A copy of Aristotle's chief works, *Ethics*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, translated from the Greek, had been given to the University of Bologna by the Emperor, Frederick II. (*Kington*, i. 442; *Faur.* i. 336). No less than seventy quotations from his works are found in the *Conv.* (*Ozan.* 204). He alone sits as a teacher. Plato, whose idealism was more in harmony with Dante's mind than the more formal system of Aristotle, may have been known by him through that philosopher, through Cicero, and through Augustine. Democritus of Abdera (B.C. 460-357) the "laughing philosopher," maintained the "fortuitous concourse of atoms," as explaining the phenomena of the universe. Diogenes (B.C. 412-323) was the cynic philosopher of Sinope; Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ (B.C. 500-423), the master of Pericles and Socrates; Thales of Miletus (B.C. 636-546), the founder of the Ionian school of physicists; Heraclitus (*fl.* B.C. 513), the "weeping



All gaze admiring, all due honour show.

There Socrates and Plato saw I pass,

Who near him stand while others further go ; 135

He who to chance assigned the world's great mass,

Thales and Zeno and Empedocles,

Diogenes and Anaxagoras,

And Heraclite and Dioscorides,

Explorer true of every quality, 140

Orpheus and Linus, Tully joined with these,

Sage Seneca and Euclid's science high,

Averrhoes, who the far-famed Comment wrote,

Hippocrates and Galen, Ptolemy

And Avicen,—the rest I cannot note ; 145

For my full theme bids me so quick pursue,

That far beneath the fact my poor words float.

That group of six divideth into two,

My wise Guide leads me by another way,

Out of the calm to where winds trembling blew ; 150

And I pass on where no light sheds its ray.

philosopher" of Ephesus; Zeno (B.C. 362-264), the founder of the Stoic school. These Dante may have read of in Aristotle, or possibly in Diogenes Laertius. In Dioscorides, the physician and botanist of Anazarba in Cilicia (2nd cent. A.D.) and in Hippocrates (B.C. 460-357), the father of Greek medicine, and Galen (A.D. 130-200), its later master, we may trace the poet's studies as a member of the Florentine guild of apothecaries (*Speziali*). The order of the names, Orpheus, Tullius, Linus (or in some MSS. Livius), seems determined by rhythmical necessities. Euclid, the mathematician (*f.* B.C. 400), and Ptolemy (*f.* A.D. 139-161), the astronomer and geographer, represent the scientific side of the poet's studies, in which the treatise *De Aquâ et Terrâ* shows him to have been a master. Avicenna (or Ibn Sina), the Arabic physician of Spain (A.D. 980-1037), and Averrhoes (Ibn Roschid), the metaphysician and philosopher (A.D. 1149-1198), whose commentary on Aristotle was from the 13th to the 14th century the great text-book of all European universities, are noticeable as showing the range of Dante's reading. The student of English literature will remember that Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Avicenna, Averrhoes, appear as part of the physician's library in Chaucer (*Prol.* to *C. T.*, ll. 434, 435), and that Roger Bacon constantly refers to them.

<sup>151</sup> Homer, Lucan, Ovid, Horace remain in their quiet and peaceful region. On leaving them, the two travellers pass once more into the darkness.

*The Second Circle—Sins of the Flesh—Paolo and Francesca*

FROM the first circle thus I passed below  
 Down to the second, which less space doth bound,  
 And keener pain, that goads to cries of woe.  
 There dreaded Minos stands and snarls around,  
 And tries the crimes of those that enter in, 5  
 Judges, and sends as he his tail hath wound.  
 I say that when the soul whom Hell doth win  
 Comes in his presence, all its guilt confessed,  
 And when that grand inquisitor of sin  
 Sees in what part of Hell that soul should rest, 10  
 He round his frame his mighty tail doth throw  
 As oft as he would fix its grade unblest.  
 Ever in size the crowd before him grew,  
 And each in turn approaches and is tried ;  
 They speak, they hear, and then are thrust below. 15  
 "O thou who to this hostel dark hast plied  
 Thy way," spake Minos, when he saw me there,  
 And for a time his great work put aside,  
 "How thou dost come, in whom dost trust, take care :  
 Let not the open entrance cheat thy soul." 20  
 Then spake my Guide: "What means this cry I  
 hear?

<sup>1</sup> From the *Limbus* or first circle of the pit the pilgrims descend into the second. Here there is the *pæna sensus* as well as the *pæna damni*, and those who are in it are (l. 38) those that have yielded to the sins of the flesh.

<sup>4</sup> Minos, like Charon, is reproduced from Virgil (*Æn.* vi. 431), and fulfils the same function and occupies an analogous position. Dante, however, with a strange grotesqueness which culminates in the fiend-sports of C. xxii. transforms him into a demon, and the fate of those whom he condemns is decided not by the "urn," as in Virgil, but by the twisting of his tail. Partly this may be explained by the fact that he remembered he was writing what he had chosen to call a "Comedy," partly by his wish that after the *limbus* and Elysian fields of the last canto, there should be nothing in Hell that had either dignity or beauty. Mediæval art abounds, it need hardly be said, in examples of a like grotesqueness in the gargoyles and *misereres* of its churches.

<sup>20</sup> An echo of the *facilis descensus*, the "*patet atri Janua Ditis*," of *Æn.* vi. 126 ; perhaps also of *Matt.* vii. 13. Minos, as an evil power, seeks to thwart the pilgrimage which is to end in the salvation of the pilgrim.



Seek not his destined journey to control;  
 So is this willed where what is willed is one  
 (Ask thou no more) with might that works the  
 whole."

Then to mine ears deep groans an entrance won, 25  
 Before unheard: I now had reached a spot  
 Where smote mine ear loud wail and many a groan.

I came unto a place where light was not,  
 Which murmurs ever like a storm-vext sea,  
 When strife of winds in conflict waxes hot. 30

That storm of Hell, which rest doth never see,  
 Bears on the spirits with its whirling blast,  
 And, hurling, dashing, pains exceedingly.

When they before the precipice have passed,  
 There pour they tears and wailing and lament, 35  
 There curses fierce at God's high power they cast.

And then I knew this pain did those torment  
 Who had in life been sinners carnally,  
 And bowed their reason to lust's blandishment.

And as the starlings through the winter sky 40  
 Float on their wings in squadron long and dense,  
 So doth that storm the sinful souls sweep by:

Here, there, up, down, it drives in wild suspense.  
 Nor any hope their agony allays,  
 Or of repose or anguish less intense. 45

And as the cranes fly chanting out their lays,  
 And in the air form into lengthened line,  
 So these I looked on wailing went their ways,  
 Souls borne where fierce winds, as I said, combine.

Wherefore I spake: "O Master, who are these, 50  
 The people who in this dark tempest pine?"

28-49 The penalty is again retributive (*Wisd.* xi. 17). The doom of those who have yielded to the impulses of passion is to be driven in never ending restlessness, through the darkness which they have made their own, by the whirling blast. Their movements recall to the mind of the observer of Nature the flight of starlings, their cries ("lai" was the Provençal term for a dirge) those of cranes.

"The first of these," he said, "of whom 'twould please  
 Thy mind to hear, was once an empress famed  
 Of many peoples, nations, languages ;  
 So sunk was she in foul lusts, evil-shamed, 55  
 That in her law she owned no rule but will,  
 That so her guilt might pass less sorely blamed.  
 Semiramis is she, whose record still  
 We read, who Ninus married and replaced :  
 She ruled the lands the Soldan's power doth fill. 60  
 The next is she who, by her love disgraced,  
 Sought death, unfaithful to Sichæus dead.  
 Then Cleopatra, wanton and unchaste."  
 Then Helena I saw, whose beauty bred 65  
 Such evil times ; the great Achilles too,  
 Who to the end in love's might combated.  
 Paris and Tristan, thousands more in view,  
 He, with his finger pointing, showed and named,  
 Whom love from this our earthly life withdrew.

<sup>59</sup> The reading adopted by Bianchi, Lubin, and others, *sugger dette*, "who Ninus suckled and embraced," though it has less MS. authority, gives a better sense. The sin of incest was that noted in Orosius (*Hist.* i. 4), the text-book of Dante's ancient history, as the crowning sin of the Messalina-like lust of Semiramis (see Gower, *Conf. Am. v.*). The *succedette*, in itself pointless, probably originated in a euphemistic feeling foreign to the mind of Dante. Orosius, indeed, names Ninyas as the son of Semiramis, Ninus as her husband : but the names are so closely allied that each may have been mistaken by transcribers for the other. Possibly, however, Dante derived his knowledge from the *Trésor* of his master, Brunetto, and he (l. 26) represents Semiramis as the wife of Ninus I., the mother of Ninus II., succeeding him on his death, and then, as also, perhaps before, startling men by her cruelty and lust. So far as it goes, this justifies the reading *succedette*.

<sup>61</sup> Dido. Comp. *Æn.* iv. 630-692 ; *Par.* ix. 97.

<sup>66</sup> The story alluded to is that of the love of Achilles for Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, which led him to enter unarmed into the temple of Apollo, where he was met and slain by Paris. See Gower, *Conf. Am.* iv. The Briseis story of Homer, *Il.* i., indicates the same temperament.

<sup>67</sup> Paris may be the lover of Helen, the Sir Paris of Troy of Spenser (*F. Q.* iii. 9, 34), but mediæval romances also had a hero of that name (see Wart. *H. E. P.* i. 146), and the collocation with Tristan suggests the thought that Dante may refer to him. The cycle of Arthurian legends had found its way in the 12th century (*Faur.* i. 286), through the Provençal poetry, into Italian and Latin verse-histories. The story of the love of Tristan and Iseult, wife of Mark, the King of Cornwall, is to be found in the *Morte d'Arthur*, and has been told in our own time by Matthew Arnold and

And as I listened to my Teacher famed, 70  
     Telling of all those dames and knights of old,  
     I was as lost, and grief its victory claimed.  
 And I began : " O Poet, I am bold  
     To wish to speak awhile to yonder pair,  
     Who float so lightly on the storm-blast cold." 75  
 And he to me : " Thou'lt see them when they fare  
     More near to us : then pray them by that love  
     That leads them : they will to thy call repair."  
 Soon as the winds their forms towards us move,  
     My voice I lift : " O souls sore spent and driven, 80  
     Come ye and speak to us, if none reprove."  
 And e'en as doves, when love its call has given,  
     With open, steady wings to their sweet nest  
     Fly, by their will borne onward through the  
         heaven,  
 So from the band where Dido was they pressed, 85  
     And came towards us through the air malign,  
     So strong the loving cry to them addressed.  
 " O living creature, gracious and benign,  
     Who com'st to visit, through the thick air perse,  
     Us, whose blood did the earth incarnadine, 90  
 Were He our friend who rules the universe,  
     We would pray Him to grant thee all His peace,  
     Since thou hast pity on our doom perverse.

Tennyson. Other references to the same literature are found in vv. 128, 137; C. xxxii. 62; *Par.* xvi. 15. The most striking illustration of its popularity is found, perhaps, in the fact that in the 14th century Italian travellers who visited England were eager to see, above all other objects of interest, the Tower of Guinevere in London, the ruins of Camelot, the valley of Tristan's victory, and the cave of Merlin (*Faz.* iv. 23).

82 For a third time the flight of birds supplies the observer with an illustration.

89 "Perse," though now obsolete, has, from its use by Chaucer (*Proz.* 441), a legitimate claim to be treated as an English word. The colour is defined in *Conv.* iv. 20 as a mixture of black and purple, the black predominating.

93 The tender sympathy of the speaker reflects that of the writer. They, more than any other of the lost, enlist his pity. They alone breathe, or fain would breathe, their prayer for his peace.

Of that which thee to hear and speak shall please  
 We too will gladly with thee speak and hear, <sup>95</sup>  
 While, as it chances now, the wild winds cease.  
 The land where I was born is situate there  
 Where to the sea-coast line descends the Po,  
 To rest with all that to him tribute bear.  
 Love, which the gentle heart learns quick to know, <sup>100</sup>  
 Seized him thou seest, for the presence fair  
 They robbed me of—the mode still deepens woe.

<sup>97</sup> The story of the two lovers, woven into a romance by Boccaccio, may be told more briefly. Francesca was the daughter of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna. There had been war between him and Malatesta, lord of Rimini. A marriage was planned as a condition of peace between Gianciotto, the eldest son of the latter, and Francesca; but as Gianciotto was deformed, his younger brother, Paolo (*Paolo il bello*), was sent to Ravenna as his proxy for the betrothal. Francesca loved him, and thought that he was to be her future husband. On her arrival at Rimini she was undeceived, but the passion of the two lovers continued, and the husband finding them together, put them both to death. They were buried together, at Pesaro, whence they were removed to Rimini, and three centuries later were found there with the silken garments in which they had been shrouded still fresh (Troja, *Veltro*, in Cary). The story must have been well known at Ravenna; but if it was first known to Dante after he went there in A.D. 1316, it must have been a comparatively late insertion in his poem. The date of the murder was A.D. 1236. The fact that Francesca had been Gianciotto's wife for more than twelve years, and that Paolo, who was the *elder* brother, had also been married for sixteen years, gives the story a somewhat different complexion from that with which art and poetry have invested it (*Faur.* i. 483; *Weg.* 39; and Tonini, *Memorie Storiche* in an *Art.* by T. A. Trollope in *S. Paul's Mag.* vol. vii.) In his earlier life Dante was with Francesca's brother at the battle of Campaldino (1289), and her father was Podesta of Florence in 1290. His latest years were spent under the protection of her nephew at Ravenna.

<sup>97</sup> The description indicates Ravenna as pointing to its being on the coast of the Adriatic Gulf, just south of the mouth of the Po, a canal from which formerly formed its harbour. It is now four miles from the sea (*Hare*, ii. 299).

<sup>100</sup> As in the story of Ugolino (C. xxxiii. 19), Dante leaves the familiar details of the story and goes to the heart of the whole matter, to facts which could have been known to none, but which he evolved, with a marvellous vividness, from his own insight into what must have been; and in doing this his treatment of the story, in its reticence and its modesty, presents a striking contrast to the way in which the story might have been told by a poet of coarser nature. If it is true that "brevity is the soul of wit," it is no less true that it is also the soul of that indescribable element in poetry which we call pathos. The story has been dramatised, and with variations, by Leigh Hunt and Silvio Pellico, and translated by Byron.

<sup>102</sup> "The mode," *sc.* the suddenness, the shame, the brutal ferocity, of the revenge which cut the lovers off in "the blossom of their sins," with no time for repentance. A *v.l.* gives *mondo*, which, however, has little to commend it.

Love, who doth none beloved from loving spare,  
 Seized me for him with might that such joy bred,  
 That, as thou seest, it leaves me not e'en here. 105  
 Love to one death our steps together led;  
 Caïna him who quenched our life doth wait."  
 Thus was it that were borne the words they said,  
 And when I heard those souls in sad estate,  
 I bowed my face, and so long kept it low, 110  
 Till spake the poet: "What dost meditate?"  
 When I made answer, I began, "Ah woe!  
 What sweet fond thoughts, what passionate desire  
 Led to the pass whence such great sorrows flow?" 115  
 Then I turned to them and began inquire,  
 "Francesca," so I spake, "thy miseries  
 A pitying grief that makes me weep inspire.  
 But tell me, in the time of those sweet sighs,  
 The hour, the mode, in which love led you on 120  
 Doubtful desires to know with open eyes."  
 And she to me: "A greater grief is none  
 Than to remember happier seasons past  
 In anguish; this thy Teacher well hath known:  
 But if thou seek'st to learn what brought at last 125  
 Our love's first hidden root to open sight,  
 I'll tell, as one who speaks while tears flow fast.

106 *Caina*. The lowest of the circles of Hell, the region of perpetual cold, the doom of the treacherous murderers of their nearest kindred (C. xxxii. 58).

112 The question, first thought and then uttered, comes, it may be, from one who had known and had yielded to like temptations. It was from no wish to weave a story of romance, but as a safeguard for himself and others, that he seeks to know how the lovers who "meant no ill" were led to the sin which involved them both on earth and behind the veil in so terrible a doom.

123 The "teacher" is probably Boethius, to whose *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* Dante (*Conv.* i. 2.) had turned in his grief for the death of Beatrice: "*Infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem et non esse*" (ii. 4). The thought has been reproduced in English literature by Chaucer (*Troil. and Cres.* iii.), and in Tennyson's well-known line—

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

It chanced one day we read for our delight  
 How love held fast the soul of Lancelot ;  
 Alone were we, nor deemed but all was right ;  
 Full many a time our eyes their glances shot, 130  
 As we read on ; our cheeks now paled, now blushed ;  
 But one short moment doomed us to our lot.  
 When as we read how smile long sought for flushed  
 Fair face at kiss of lover so renowned,  
 He kissed me on my lips, as impulse rushed, 135  
 All trembling ; now with me for aye is bound.  
 Writer and book were Gallehault to our will :  
 No time for reading more that day we found."  
 And while one spirit told the story, still  
 The other wept so sore, that, pitying, I 140  
 Fainted away as though my grief would kill,  
 And fell, as falls a dead man, heavily.

<sup>128</sup> The story is found in the Italian romance of *Lancelot of the Lake*, c. 66, as given in *Scart.* i. 46. The Queen Guinevere loved Lancelot, and was loved in return, but it was through Galeotto, or Gallehault, that they were brought together, and she, at his prompting, and on his promise of secrecy, kissed her lover (comp. *Par.* xvi. 15). It is open to conjecture what grounds, if any, Dante had for this feature of the story. Was the romaunt of Lancelot found in the room where the lovers met their fate? Or did the poet enter his protest against the erotic character which so largely tainted this form of the Provençal literature of his time? Had he seen in others, or felt in himself, its fatal power for evil as a stimulus of the passions which it described? Anyhow, we may remember that Guido Novello, the poet's host at Ravenna, was nephew to Francesca, and that her father had been Podesta of Florence in 1290 (*Faur.* i. 475), and that there may therefore have been some grounds, within Dante's reach, for the story as he tells it. Gallehault, it may be noted, is not to be identified, as some translators have done, with the Galahad of the Arthurian cycle, who appears, as in Tennyson's poems, as the pattern of a stainless purity.

<sup>142</sup> The one solitary instance in the whole poem, of the pity which has the same effect as terror. Comp. "I fell at his feet as dead" (*Rev.* i. 17).



*The Third Circle—Cerberus—Sins of Gluttony—Ciacco*

THEN when the sense returned that I had lost,  
 Through pity for those two so near allied,  
 With pangs of sorrow stunned and tempest-tost,  
 New torments and new tortures on each side  
 I saw around me as I onward passed, 5  
 And turned, and here and there the prospect spied.  
 In the third circle, where the rain falls fast,  
 Am I,—eterne, curst, cold, and working woe,  
 Its law and state unchanged from first to last ;  
 Huge hail, dark water, whirling clouds of snow 10  
 There through the murky air come sweeping on;  
 Foul smells the earth which drinks this in below,  
 And Cerberus, fierce beast, like whom is none,  
 Barks like a dog from out his triple jaws,  
 At all the tribe those waters close upon. 15  
 Red glare his eyes and taloned are his paws,  
 His belly large, his beard all greased and foul;  
 Those souls he tears, flays, quarters, with his claws.  
 That rain-storm makes them all like fierce dogs howl;  
 This side with that they vainly seek to screen, 20  
 And round and round those wretched sinners roll.  
 When Cerberus, that great serpent, us had seen,  
 His mouth he opened and his tusks were shown,  
 And not a limb was as it erst had been.  
 And then my Leader, with his palms out-thrown, 25  
 Took of the earth, and filling full his hand,  
 Into those hungry gullets flung it down:

7 The third circle is that of the gluttonous. The scene is painted as a contrast to the banquets, where all was bright and warm and cheerful, and the wine-cup passed merrily, and the air was laden with perfume, for which they had sold their lives. Cerberus, described as in *Æn.* vi. 417-420, but, like Charon, transformed into a demon (l. 32), is rightly the watch-dog of the region, his triple jaws and his eager cravings being the symbol of the unrestrained voracity of those who were condemned to it. They, in their turn, lie grovelling in the foulness of the mire, as they had grovelled in their lifetime in the foulness of their pleasures. There may be worse sins and

And as a dog who, craving food, doth stand  
     Barking, grows quiet while his food he gnaws,  
     And feels and fights at hunger's fierce command, 80  
 So was it with those vile and filthy jaws  
     Of Cerberus the fiend, who roars so dread,  
     The souls would fain that it might deafness cause.  
 And then upon those souls our feet did tread  
     Whom the fierce rain keeps prostrate on the  
         ground, 53  
     In semblance men, yet shadows vain and dead.  
 Prone on their face they all of them were found,  
     Save one, who rose and upright sat when he  
     Beheld us passing, on our journey bound.  
 "O thou who thus art led this Hell to see," 40  
     He spake, "recall me, if thou hast the power;  
     Thou had'st thy being ere I ceased to be."  
 And I to him: "Thy anguish keen and sore,  
     It may be, makes me utterly forget,  
     So that it seems I ne'er saw thee before; 45  
 But tell me who thou art, who thus art set  
     In such sad region, punishment so strange,  
     That worse may be, but fouler never yet?"

worse torments than those of gluttony, but of all vices it was, from Dante's standpoint, the most loathsome (l. 48).

<sup>48</sup> For the first time Dante brings before us, as in Hell, one whom he had himself known, and who recognises him. The name Ciacco, which means Hog, may have been the actual name of an individual (it is said to occur in old Florentine records), or the sobriquet of a known person, or the representative of a class, the *Dives*, as it were, of Florence. The whole Canto appears to have been written at a time when Dante's mind, in his poverty and exile, was embittered by the thought of the selfish luxury of those whom he had known in Florence. He would show them "to what complexion they must come at last" if they continued so to live. This, I venture to think, rather than any personal or political vindictiveness, is the explanation of his naming so many of those whom he places in his Hell. Abstract condemnations of evil made little impression. He must show them that the life of A. B. and C. D., if they had died and "made no sign," must end in their condemnation. The very consciousness that he was not really condemning would give greater freedom to his speech. Anyhow, he welcomed an opportunity for a thrust at the luxurious "envy" that kept him from his beloved city.



And he to me: "Thy city, where free range  
 Envy doth take, the sack's full measure crowned, 50  
 Held me ere I that life serene did change;  
 You townsmen called me Ciacco, swinish hound;  
 For that foul sin of gluttonous appetite,  
 I, as thou see'st, am thus rain-pelted found.  
 Nor am I here alone in this ill plight, 55  
 For all thou see'st are subject to like pain  
 For like offence." Then utterance failed him quite;  
 And I replied: "Thy sorrows me constrain  
 To weep, Ciacco, for thy lot forlorn;  
 But say, know'st thou what future doth remain 60  
 For dwellers in that city, faction-torn;  
 If one just man there be; the occasion whence,  
 Tell me, that it by discord so is worn?"  
 And he to me: "From strife prolonged, intense, 65  
 They will to blood pass on; the wilder race  
 Will drive the other forth with much offence;  
 A little while, and this within the space  
 Of summers three shall fall, the other rise  
 By force of him who trims his sails apace.

<sup>51</sup> We note the pathos of the touch which contrasts the "life serene" of earth with the foulness of the rain and mire.

<sup>61</sup> Dante's theory of the knowledge of the lost is (as stated in C. x. 100-108) that they see the events that are to come, but are ignorant of what is passing on earth in the present.

<sup>64</sup> The prophecy, purporting to be given in A.D. 1300, was, of course, written after the event, probably some years after. The events may be read in Dino Comp. and Villani (viii. 39). The "blood" points to a fight between the Cerchi and Donati factions (May 1, 1301). The "wilder party" were the former, the Bianchi, perhaps as being but recent settlers in Florence, their former home being the Val di Sieve (*Par.* xvi. 65), who in 1301 succeeded in banishing the leaders of the Neri. The tone in which Dante speaks of both factions indicates the time at which he had begun to "form a party by himself" (*Par.* xvii. 69), perhaps also a vain hope, at the time when he wrote this Canto, that both would court his assistance. In April 1302 the Bianchi, and among them Dante, were in their turn banished.

<sup>69</sup> The English words give the meaning which Boccaccio assigns to *piaggia*, lit. "is on the coast," as used by Florentines of one who says one thing and means another, without altogether losing the figurative character of the word. The person alluded to may be either Charles of Valois or Boniface VIII., more probably the latter. The Neri defeated the Bianchi at Castel Piceno in 1302, at Lastra in 1304.

Long will it lift its forehead to the skies, 70  
 Keeping the other under burdens sore,  
 Though it wax wroth and utter angry cries.  
 The just are two: and men heed these no more;  
 Envy and pride and avarice, these three  
 Are sparks that kindle fire in their hearts' core." 75  
 So his sad tearful utterance ended he;  
 And I to him: "More news I fain would hear,  
 And bounty of more converse grant to me:  
 Tegghiaio, Farinata, worthiest pair,  
 Mosca, Arrigo, Rusticucci too, 80  
 And others who in good deeds strove to share,  
 Tell me where are they; let them come in view;  
 Strong wish constrains me; let me learn, I pray,  
 If Heaven console them or Hell make them rue?"  
 And he: "Among the blackest souls are they, 85  
 Sunk in the pit by other than my crime;  
 Thou may'st behold them, if so low thou stray.  
 But when thou art again in life's sweet clime,  
 I pray thee bring to others' thoughts my name:  
 I may not speak nor answer longer time." 90

<sup>73</sup> Of the two, Dante himself was probably one. Guido Cavalcanti (see C. x. 63) or Dino Compagni may have been the other. Villani, however (x. 89), names two citizens, Barduccio and Giov. Vespignano, who died in 1331, as having been eminently "just and good," and the words may therefore possibly refer to them.

<sup>74</sup> "Envy, pride, and avarice" are named (*Vill.* viii. 68) as being the special sins that had involved Florence in disasters. It has been inferred that the three sins are the same as those symbolised by the three beasts of C. i., and therefore that the leopard stands for envy, not lust, but the inference is, to say the least, not conclusive.

<sup>79</sup> Tegghiaio is named with Rusticucci in C. xvi. 41-44, as among the sinful companions of Brunetto, though of honourable fame on earth. For Farinata see C. x. 32; for Mosca, C. xxviii. 106. Arrigo, not named elsewhere in the poem, is identified with Oderigo Fifanti, who, with Mosca, took part in the murder of Buonodelmonte (*Vill.* v. 38).

<sup>86</sup> The "other sin," of which men thought lightly, but which Dante had learnt to leathe as hateful, is indicated in C. xvi. That form of sensual evil was "blacker" than the gluttony of Ciacco.

<sup>89</sup> The desire for fame still survives, in Dante's teaching (with some special exceptions) C. xxxii. 94, even in the lost. Better, they think (perhaps he

Then his fixed steadfast gaze ascant became :

Awhile he glanced at me, then bowed his head,  
Then fell, and with those blind ones bore his  
shame.

"No more he rises," then my Teacher said,

"This side the angelic trumpet's awful sound, 95  
When He shall come, the Potentate so dread,

And each, his own sad sepulchre refound,  
Shall take again the flesh and form of man,  
And hear what shall eternally resound."

So passed we through that mixture foul and wan 100  
Of shadows and of rain-storm, pacing slow,  
And on the life to come our converse ran.

Wherefore I said, "O Master, will this woe,  
After the last great sentence, increase find,  
Or lessen, or burn on, nor changing know?" 105

And he to me: "Thy science call to mind,  
Which wills that as each thing perfection gains,  
Or bliss or bale it feels in fuller kind;

Albeit this race, condemned to bitter pains, 110  
The true perfection never more may reach,  
There more than here completeness it attains."

also had once thought), to be named as evil than not named at all. Comp. C. xiii. 77, xv. 119, xvi. 85, *et al.*

93 The "blind ones" are those who are unable even to lift their heads above the mire, as Ciacco had done.

96 "Potentate." The Italian *Podesta* recalls the thought of the supreme authority often assigned in the Italian republics of the 13th century to some foreign ruler who was called in to repress the factions of the city which invited them. Here, as elsewhere (C. x. 10; *Purg.* i. 75), Virgil's knowledge has been enlarged behind the veil, and he knows the doctrines of the Resurrection of the Body and the Last Judgment.

103 The question shows how the mind of Dante, like that of Aquinas, brooded over the problems of eschatology. The thought of a mitigation of penalties instinctively suggested itself, but was repressed by the philosophy on which his theology was based. His "science" taught him that the more complete the nature, the greater must be its capacity for joy (*Par.* xiv. 43-45) or suffering, and therefore, when the soul was re-united to the body, the lost would be more tormented, and the joys of the blessed would be greater. So Augustine had taught, *Civ. D.* xxi. 10, and so Aquinas (*Summ. P.* iii.; *Supp. Qn.* 93). Here again was another bar to the hope of any respite or alleviation.

So wound we round that pathway, and our speech  
 We carried further than I now may tell;  
 And then we came where steps led down the breach,  
 And Plutus found, the deadliest foe in Hell. 115

## CANTO VII

*Plutus—The Fourth Circle—Sins of Avarice and Profusion—  
 Fortune and her Wheel—The Fifth Circle—The Murmurers*

“*Papè Satan, Aleppe, pap’ Satan!*”

So Plutus spake with accents rough and hoarse,  
 And then that gentle Sage, who all could scan,  
 Said for my help, “Let not thy fear of worse  
 Now do thee harm; whate’er may be his power, 5  
 It may not down the rock’s face bar thy course.”  
 Then turning to those swollen lips and sour,  
 He said, “Thou wolf accursèd, silence keep;  
 Thyself, within, with that thy rage devour.

115 Plutus, the money-god, as the special warden of those in the fourth circle, the avaricious and the prodigal, to whom money had been the occasion of sins at opposite extremes.

1 The wide variety of interpretations shows that these mysterious words have been the *crux* of commentators.

(1) *Papè*=Greek and Latin interjection *papæ*; *aleppe*=Heb. *aleph*, in sense of “chief.” Hence the whole=“Ho, Satan, Ho, Satan, my Lord;” a note of warning against the intruders.

(2) Assuming the words to be Hebrew—“Vomit, O mouth of Satan, vomit, O mouth of Satan, flames of fire” (Schier).

(3) Assuming them to be Greek—“Ho, Satan, Ho, Satan, unconquered one” (Olivieri).

(4) Assuming them to be French—“*Pas paix, Satan; pas paix, Satan, à l’épée*” (Scart).

The last falls in in part with Benvenuto Cellini’s strange story (*Life*, c. xxii.) that he heard the words “*Paix, paix, Satan; allez paix*,” spoken by the porter of a court of justice at Paris to the crowd whom he was endeavouring to keep out, and that they reminded him of Dante. Rossetti’s scheme led him to see in the words a hint to the initiated that the Pope was Satan.

7 As in the case of Minos, the grotesque element prevails over the received classical type of the god of riches.

Not without cause our journey to the deep ; 10  
     So is it willed where Michael once on high  
     Made vengeance on the o'erproud rebels sweep."  
 As the full sails before the wind that fly,  
     Fall all entangled when it snaps the mast,  
     So on the earth the fallen fiend did lie : 15  
 Thus to the fourth great pit we downward passed,  
     Advancing further on the dolorous shore,  
     Which all the evil of the world holds fast.  
 Ah ! God's great justice, heaping evermore  
     New toils and torments that I then did see ! 20  
     Why doth our guilt of sorrow work such store ?  
 As by Charybdis rolls the vexèd sea,  
     And breaking, this on that, the billows fall,  
     So must that folk in strange dance ever be.  
 Then I beheld a crowd more dense than all, 25  
     And on this side and that, with howling cries,  
     Each rolling with his chest a ponderous ball.  
 They clashed together ; then as in a trice  
     Each one turned round and back his way did find,  
     Crying, "Why grasp ye ?" "Why let slip your 30  
         prize?"  
 So through the circle sad their way they wind  
     On either hand to point just opposite,  
     And ever shout that verse of basest kind.

12 Comp. *Rev.* xii. 7-9. I take the *strupo* of the original, with Montl, as = *truppa*. Most commentators connect it with *stupro*, and translate "adultery" or "adulterer," the seduction of the angels by Satan being thought of as a spiritual adultery.

13 The similitude implies travel by sea as well as land. Had Dante, as in l. 22, seen Charybdis, or did he take it as a stock image ?

25-30 The meaning of the strange spectacle is explained in 40-45. Dante had learnt in his *Ethics* (*Arist. Eth. Nic.* ii. 6, iv. 1) that virtue lies in the mean between opposite extremes ; in the case of money, between those of avarice and prodigality. And here, as in the proverb, the "extremes meet." The whole canto may be read as a special protest against the plutocracy of Florence.

26 So in *Purg.* xx. 11, the "ancient wolf," *sc.* avarice, is described as having more victims than "all the other beasts" that are symbols of vices. Comp. C. i. 51.

Then each one wheeled, when that point came in  
sight,

Through his half-circle, still that game to play. 35

And I, whose heart was pierced with their ill plight,  
Said, "O my Master, tell me now, I pray,

What tribe are these, and were they clerks, that crew  
Of tonsured ones who on our left hand stay?"

Then he to me: "All these their mental view 40

Had so distorted in their primal life

That nothing spent they then in measure due.

Those yelping cries with meaning clear are rife,

When they the circle's furthest limits reach,

Where faults opposed part them in ceaseless strife. 45

Clerks were all these, with crown left bare on each;

Yea, popes and cardinals thou here may'st see,

Whom avarice did its utmost mischief teach."

And I: "O Master, in such company

Needs must be some that I should recognise, 50

Who tainted were with this foul malady."

And he to me: "Vain thought thou dost surmise;

The undiscerning life which won them scorn

Now makes them dim to keenest searching eyes.

For ever to these buttings shall they turn, 55

These from their tombs again their forms shall rear

With fast-closed fist, and those with tresses shorn.

Ill giving and ill keeping of that fair

Bright world have robbed them, and at this game set;

For what it is I use no phrases rare. 60

<sup>39</sup> The avaricious, as being the worst of the two, are represented as on the left.

<sup>46</sup> The avarice of the clergy was with Dante, as with S. Francis of Assisi (*Par.* xi. 124-129), with Chaucer, Wyclif, and other reformers, the great cause of the corruptions of the Church and of the world, and popes and cardinals, with their proverbial simony and nepotism, were the most conspicuous examples of it.

<sup>53</sup> As with the neutrals of C. iii. 49, so with those who yield in either form to Mammon-worship, fame and name are lost in the baseness of their lives. The "undiscerning," unknowing life leaves them unknown and undiscerned.

<sup>60</sup> The poet's *apologia* for the use of the colloquial "game" (Ital. *zuffa*).



Now canst thou, O my son, full vision get  
 Of that brief farce we know as Fortune's boon,  
 For which mankind in scuffle fierce are met,  
 Not all the gold that lies beneath the moon,  
 Or ever lay, of all these souls in pain 65  
 Could give a moment's rest to even one."  
 Then said I : " Master, tell me yet again ;  
 Who is this Fortune of whom thou dost speak,  
 Who the world's wealth doth in her clutch retain ? "  
 And he to me : " O creatures frail and weak, 70  
 What blindness this that leads you to offend !  
 With open mouth do thou my doctrine seek :  
 He whose high wisdom doth all else transcend  
 Made all the heavens and gave to each its guide,  
 So that each part to each its light might send, 75  
 Distributing its radiance far and wide ;  
 So likewise for the splendours of the world  
 He did one ministress and queen provide,  
 By whom vain wealth in chance and change is whirled  
 From race to race, from this to that entail, 80  
 Beyond the power of human counsels hurled ;  
 Wherefore this people reigns and that doth fail,  
 After her judgment who in secret still,  
 Like snake in grass, makes her intent prevail.  
 Your wisdom cannot stand against her will ; 85  
 With forethought, counsel, might, she orders all  
 Her realm, as other gods the realms they fill.

<sup>70</sup> Men see in the unequal distribution of the world's goods the play of a blind chance, and Dante had at one time felt his faith shaken by it (*Conv.* iv. 11). He is now taught that even there also may be traced the workings of a righteous government ; that Fortune is but the minister of the providence of God. He orders through His angels the varying glories of the stars. He, through her, distributes power and riches according to His will. Men may curse or murmur, but she cares not for them. All things, even here, work ultimately for good, and "all her ways are blest." In l. 96 we have the idea, often reproduced in later art, of Fortune and her wheel. Dante may have seen it in a MS. of Boethius (*Lecroix*, p. 49).

<sup>84</sup> An echo of the *latet anguis in herba* of Virgil, *Ecl.* iii. 93.

<sup>87</sup> The "other gods" are the angels or intelligences, to each of which is assigned his sphere of action in the material or moral world. *Comp. Canz.* xii. on the movers of the third heaven.

Her wheel revolves as ceaseless changes call ;  
     Necessity constrains her to be swift,  
     So oft comes one to whom strange changes fall. 90  
 She, she it is on whom men's curses drift,  
     Pilloried in shame by those who owe her praise,  
     And yet their voice in wrongful blame uplift.  
 She hears it not, but ever blessed stays ;  
     Joyous, with all that primal company, 95  
     She turns her wheel and blest are all her ways."  
 Now pass we down to greater misery ;  
     Already sinks each star which then arose  
     When I set out ; to halt we are not free. 100  
 We crossed the circle to the shore where flows  
     A stream that bubbling pours its boiling flood  
     Adown a gully opening as it goes.  
 The water was than perse more sombre-hued,  
     And we, with escort of that stream dark-grey,  
     By path of fashion strange our way pursued. 105  
 There, Styx its name, a marsh before us lay,  
     By that sad river made, as it doth gain  
     The shore in dreary dimness wrapt away.  
 And I, who stood, to gaze around me fain,  
     Saw people mire-besprent in that foul pit, 110  
     All naked and with looks of angry pain.  
 These smote each other ; not with hands they hit  
     Alone, but with their heads and breasts and feet,  
     Gnawing each other's bodies bit by bit.

<sup>100</sup> The pilgrims pass to the fifth circle and the Stygian river. For "perse," see note on C. v. 89. The description follows the *tristis unda*, the *palus inamabilis* of *Æn.* vi. 438. The region now entered is that of the murmurers, guilty of the sin, an offshoot, in its sullenness, of that of wrath (l. 116), which in the moral theology of the Middle Ages was known as *accidia* (see Chaucer's *Persones's Tale*), the word being translated from the Greek ἀκηδεία. They too come under the law of retribution. They had spent their lives in sullen sighs, regardless of the elements of gladness which might be found on all sides. Now they sigh for evermore and with too good cause. The poet's condemnation of the temper of discontent (see l. 91-93) is all the more noteworthy as coming from one who, in exile and poverty, had more cause for sighing than most men. But his mind was open, as the whole poem shows, to the sweet influences of Nature. Had he not the sun



Said my good Master, "Son, the souls now meet 115  
 Thine eyes, of those whom anger hath o'erthrown ;  
 And I would have thee this as certain treat,  
 That 'neath the pool are those that sigh and groan,  
 And make the water bubble, as we see,  
 Where'er the surface to thy glance is shown. 120  
 Fixed in the mire they say, 'Full sad were we,  
 Where the sun gladdens all the pleasant clime,  
 Bearing within dull mists of melancholy ;  
 Now are we sadder in this black foul slime.'  
 This hymn those spirits gurgled in their throat, 125  
 For words full formed are wanting in their rhyme."  
 So wound we where those filthy waters float,  
 A great arc 'twixt the dry bank and the wet,  
 With our eyes turned those mire-gorged souls to note :  
 At a tower's foot at last our steps were set. 130

## CANTO VIII

*Phlegyas—The City of Dis and its Inhabitants—Filippo  
 Argenti—The Closed Gates*

I SAY, my tale continuing, that long while  
 Ere we had reached the foot of that high tower,  
 Our eyes towards the summit of the pile

and stars, and could he not find peace in them? (*Ep.* in *Frat. O. M.* iii. 500.) Comp. Church (p. 152) for Dante's love of light.

<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio's explanation of "continuing" is worth noting. The first seven cantos, as he tells the tale, had been written, in Latin or Italian, at Florence and left there. They were afterwards brought to Dante, and then he resumed his work with this word. The story is not worth much, and it is clear that passages like C. i. 101-105, vi. 64-68, must have been written after his exile.

<sup>2</sup> The scenery, possibly drawn from some actual Italian city as approached by night, is at any rate strikingly characteristic of mediæval landscape. The walled city, half surrounded by a slow river and plashy marsh, the two towers on either side of which defend it from attack, the ferry-boat which plies between the two in the absence of a bridge, the fire-signals that pass from one to the other at the approach of strangers, these are features which might have been found in Mantua or many cities in Northern Italy which Dante had visited.

Were drawn by flamelets twain that hovered o'er,  
 While from afar another made reply,— 5  
 So far, that scarce the eye to see had power;  
 And to the sea of wisdom then turned I,  
 And said, "What meaneth this? and yonder fire,  
 What answers it? and who such converse ply?" 10  
 And he to me: "Across these waves of mire  
 What there they wait for may be clearly seen,  
 If the pit's reek hide not thine eyes' desire."  
 Never did bowstring wing an arrow keen  
 That took its way so swift athwart the air, 15  
 As then I saw a little boat between  
 The waters glide towards us then and there,  
 Under one boatman's guidance, and no more,  
 Who cried, "Thou felon soul, art thou come here?"  
 "Ah! Phlegyas! Phlegyas! vainly dost thou roar," 20  
 Then spake my Master: "at this present turn  
 Thine are we only till the pool's passed o'er."  
 And e'en as one who some great fraud doth learn  
 Done to him, sullenly the wrong doth note,  
 So Phlegyas' wrath within his breast did burn. 25  
 My Leader first embarked in that small boat,  
 Then made me also come and with him stand,  
 Nor, till I came, as laden did it float.  
 Soon as my Guide and I the bark had manned,  
 That ancient prow starts, cutting deeper wake  
 Than is its wont with other travelling band. 30  
 While we the stillness of that dead stream brake,  
 Before me rose one foul with miry clay,  
 And said, "Who'rt thou who ere the time dost take

19 Phlegyas, the father of Ixion, another of the *personae* of the *Æn.* (vi 618), where he appears as bearing the doom of many sins, specially of having burnt the temple of Delphi. He too, like Minos and Charon, is demonised in the new mythology, and, partly from his name, as = the fiery one, becomes the guardian fiend of the circle of the wrathful ones.

32 Of Filippo Argenti, with whom the object of the poet's scorn is identified in l. 61, we learn from Boccaccio that he was a rich cavalier who used to shoe his horses with silver, and thence derived the name, which stuck to

Thy way?" And I: "I come, but do not stay.  
 But who art thou that art so filthy grown?" 35  
 And he: "Thou see'st I'm one who weeps alway."  
 And I to him: "With tears and many a groan,  
 Thou cursed spirit, may'st thou still abide;  
 Foul as thou art, thy face to me is known."  
 Then both his hands he laid on our boat's side, 40  
 Whereat my Master wise thrust him away,  
 And said, "Off, off, where other hounds do hide!"  
 Then he his arms around my neck did lay,  
 My face he kissed and said, "Indignant soul!  
 Blest is the womb that brought thee to the day!" 45  
 Proud wight was he on earth beyond control;  
 Good act is none his fair fame to attest;  
 So through his ghost wrath's fiery tempests roll.  
 How many, there as mighty kings addressed,  
 Shall here as swine be wallowing in the mire, 50  
 Leaving a name on which dread shame shall rest!"  
 And I: "O Master, great is my desire  
 To see him soused in this foul turbid sea,  
 Before our footsteps from the lake retire."  
 And he to me: "Ere thou the shore can'st see, 55  
 Thy eager craving shall be satisfied;  
 'Tis meet such wish should be fulfilled for thee."  
 Soon after this such havoc I descried  
 Made of him by that mire-besmearèd crew,  
 That still I praise God, still my thanks abide. 60

him instead of his patronymic, Cavacciuoli-Adimari, and that he was conspicuous for the violence of his temper. He belonged to the party of the Neri, and is said to have had a brother who took possession of Dante's property when it was confiscated. (*Dec.* ix. 8.)

<sup>45</sup> Noticeable as the one solitary instance in Dante's writings in which he makes any allusion to his parents. It is reasonable to infer from it that he looked to his mother's influence on his early years as having taught him "the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn," which is part of the true poet's dower. He could rejoice in seeing that insufferable pride brought low, the man who had scorned humanity made the laughing-stock of the demons (the exultation has its parallels in Tertullian and Milton), all the more so as he saw in him the type of "mighty kings" and others who despised their kind.

"Have at Filipp' Argenti!" was their new  
 Wild cry, and then the spectre Florentine [through.  
 Turned in wild wrath and gnawed his own flesh  
 And there we left him; not another line  
 I write of him; but groans fell on mine ears, 65  
 Wherefore before me straight I fixed mine eyne.  
 And my good Master said, "My son, now nears  
 The city which by name of Dis is known,  
 Where a great throng of townsmen stern appears."  
 And I: "O Master, even now are shown 70  
 Its minarets, far off in yonder dale;  
 Vermeil, as if from out a furnace thrown,  
 They rise." And he to me: "The fire of bale  
 Within, eternal, casts that lurid glow,  
 As thou mayst see, in this infernal vale." 75  
 Then we arrived within the fosses low  
 That compass round that land disconsolate;  
 The walls to me as iron seemed to show.  
 Not without making first a circuit great,  
 We reached a point at which our boatman cried 80  
 With loud harsh voice, "Out with you! see the gate!"  
 More than a thousand at those gates I spied,  
 Rained down from Heaven, who, hot with anger, said,  
 "Who then is this, who, though he hath not died,  
 Now passes through the kingdom of the dead?" 85  
 And then my prudent Master made a sign  
 That he to speak in secret purposed.  
 Then they their great wrath somewhat did confine,  
 And said, "Come thou alone, and let him go  
 Who hath so rashly crossed this kingdom's line, 90

68 Dis in *Æn.* vi. 269, 397, appears as the synonym of Pluto. Here, as in the city of the Lord of Hell, we meet, not as in the earlier circles with the souls of the lost only, but with the demons who are its "townsmen stern."

70 The "minarets" (*meschite*=mosques) speak of a knowledge of Eastern cities which may have been learnt from Marco Polo, who returned to Venice in 1295, or other travellers. The word was probably chosen on account of its association with heathen barbarism.

88 The wrath of the demons springs from their seeing in Dante one over

Alone retracing his mad path below ;  
Let him his power test ; here shalt thou remain,  
Who hast his guide been through this land of woe.”  
Think, Reader, how my soul was filled with pain  
On hearing of those cursèd words the sound ; 95  
For ne’er I thought our earth to see again.  
“ O my dear Teacher, more than seven times found  
My safety and defence, who me hast freed  
From peril great that compassed me around,  
O leave me not,” I said, “ in such sore need ; 100  
If going farther be to us denied,  
Let us go back together with all speed.”  
Then that dear Lord, who thus far had been guide,  
Said, “ Fear thou not ; our journey none can stay,  
By such a high One is it ratified ; 105  
But wait thou here for me, and thy dismay  
Comfort, and feed thy soul with hope’s bright  
smile ;  
I will not leave thee in this dark world’s way.”  
So he departs and leaves me there awhile,  
My gentlest Father ; I in doubt remain, 110  
For ‘ Yes ’ and ‘ No ’ my wildered brain beguile.  
What he spake to them I could not hear plain,  
But with them he but little while did rest,  
Ere all went helter-skelter back again.  
They shut the gates against my Master’s breast, 115  
Those enemies of ours, while he outside  
Turned to me, and with slow steps onward pressed.

whom they have no power, and whose journey through Hell will be for his own salvation, and, through his teaching, for that of others.

<sup>97</sup> Commentators count up the seven instances of deliverance from the wolf, Charon, and others, but the number is probably used indefinitely, as in *Prov.* xxiv. 16, *Eccles.* xi. 2.

<sup>105</sup> The faith of Virgil represents, of course, here, as in C. iii. 95, that of the poet himself. He has learnt from the higher wisdom which reproves his doubt to say, “ If God be for us, who can be against us ? ” Not less truly does Virgil’s half-doubting fear, or wrath that looks like fear, represent the conflicting feelings in Dante’s soul.

His eyes he had cast down, his forehead wide  
 Shorn of all boldness, and with sighs he said,  
 "Who hath to me these homes of woe denied?" 120  
 And then to me: "Nay, be not thou afraid  
 Because my wrath is hot; I'll win the day,  
 Whatever plans are for resistance made.  
 Not new this haughty malice they display;  
 They tried it once at far less secret door, 125  
 Which ever since without its bolts doth stay:  
 Thou saw'st that writing dread the portals o'er:  
 Already thence comes one adown the slope  
 Without an escort, by each circle's shore,  
 Through whom this land a way for us shall ope." 130

## CANTO IX

*The Angel-Helper—The Erimyes—Medusa—The Sixth  
 Circle—The Heresiarchs*

THAT hue which coward fear spread o'er my face,  
 Seeing my Leader turn back to the rear,  
 Bade his, to him unwonted, flee apace.  
 Intent he stood, as one who seeks to hear,  
 For the eye failed to throw its glance afar, 5  
 Through the black air and thick mists hovering  
 near.  
 "Behoves us still to conquer in this war,"  
 Spake he: "if not . . . such help to us was given. . . .  
 Still, till it comes, how slow the moments are!"

<sup>125</sup> As in C. iv. 53, we have the legend of the Gospel of Nicodemus (Part II.). Satan and Hades and their hosts resist the approach of the Crucified One, but He breaks asunder the bars of iron and the gates of Hell give way before Him. So in the Roman office for Easter Eve, "*Hodie portas mortis et seras Salvator noster dirupit.*"

<sup>7</sup> The dramatic abruptness of the broken sentences, in which hope and fear alternate, reminds us of the "*Quos ego*" of *Æn.* i. 135. Line 8 alludes, of course, to Beatrice.



Well saw I soon, as he to hide had striven 10  
 His opening speech with what came in the rear,  
 That first and last on different track were driven.  
 But none the less in me his speech wrought fear,  
 For I that broken phrase interpreted  
 In sense, perchance, than what he meant more drear. 15  
 "Doth ever any down this cavern tread,  
 Coming from that first grade of this dark pit,  
 Where all their pain is but that hope is fled?"  
 This asked I, and he spake, "So chances it  
 But seldom one from out our company 20  
 Doth on this path by which I travel flit;  
 True is it, once before, down hither I  
 Journeyed, by that stern Erichtho constrained,  
 Wont souls to summon where their corpses lie.  
 Scarce had my soul from flesh its exit gained, 25  
 When she forced me within these walls to come,  
 To fetch a soul in Judas' pit detained.  
 The lowest region that, and darkest gloom,  
 And furthest from the Heaven that all doth bind:  
 Full well I know the road; for trust make room. 30  
 This fen, which breathes the foul and noisome wind,  
 The city of great sorrows girdeth round,  
 Where without wrath we may not entrance find."  
 More then he said, not now in memory found,  
 For by mine eyes my whole soul drawn had been 35  
 To the high tower with fiery summit crowned,

<sup>22</sup> No commentator has succeeded in tracing the legend thus referred to. It may have found a place among the floating myths which gathered round the name of Virgil as a magician, and of which we have a sample in Boccaccio's *Commentary*. In Dante's favourite Lucan (vi. 508), Erichtho is a Thessalian sorceress, who, at the request of Sextus Pompeius, before the battle of Pharsalia, calls up a spirit to foretell the issue of the conflict between his father and Cæsar. As the circle of Judas contained also as its chief representatives the souls of Brutus and Cassius, the thought suggested is that Erichtho was employed by some one (Augustus?) to compel Virgil to bring up one of those two murderers of Cæsar to foretell the future.

<sup>38</sup> The Erinnyes are described as in *Æn.* vi. 231, that description coming in its turn from the older Greek myths as represented in *Æsch. Eumen.* 46-56.

Where in a moment, standing up, were seen  
 Three Furies, hell-bred and of blood-stained hue,  
 Who had the limbs of women and their mien.  
 Green hydras as their girdle met my view, 40  
 Serpents and hornèd vipers served for hair,  
 And o'er their temples dread a garland threw;  
 And he, who knew that they the handmaids were  
 Of the great Queen of endless misery,  
 Said to me, "Lo, the fierce Erinnyes there! 45  
 Megæra on the left hand meets thine eye,  
 Alecto there stands wailing on the right,  
 Tisiphone between." No more heard I.  
 Each tore her breast with nails in sore despite,  
 Smote with her palms, and cried with such sharp 50  
 tone,  
 That I the poet clasped for very fright.  
 "Let but Medusa come; we'll make him stone,"  
 Upon us looking down they all did cry;  
 "That Theseus went unpunished was ill done."  
 "Turn thyself back, and keep fast closed thine eye, 55  
 For if the Gorgon come, and thou it see,  
 Thou ne'er again shalt reach the world on high."  
 So spake my Guide, and with his own hands he  
 Turned me; nor was he with my hands content,  
 But with his own he helped to blindfold me. 60  
 O ye who own a mind intelligent,  
 Admire the wisdom which is here concealed  
 Beneath the veil of rhymes so strangely blent.

<sup>52</sup> Medusa, the Gorgon head that turned whoso looked on it to stone. That, the Furies think, will stop the path of the intruders.

<sup>54</sup> The myth thus alluded to was that Theseus and Peirithous went into Hades to bring Proserpine to earth; that the latter was slain by Cerberus, the former kept as a prisoner in the city of Pluto till he was rescued by Hercules. The cry of the Furies is one of regret that they had not made their vengeance more complete. *Mal non vengiammo* must not be taken, as some translators and commentators have taken it, as *= non mal*. Dante is rescued from the doom which the Gorgon's head would have brought on him.

<sup>61</sup> The words compel us to see in the scene just described more than a poet's sportive use of the machinery of mythology, and we have to ask what



And now upon the turbid waves there pealed  
 A crash and clang at which I stood aghast, 65  
 That made both shores to trembling movement yield ;  
 Not otherwise it was than tempest blast,  
 Impetuous rushing through opposing heat,  
 That smites the forest, sweeping on so fast,  
 It rends the branches, beats them, bears off fleet, 70  
 And in its pride moves on, while dust-clouds dance,  
 And beasts and shepherds drives to seek retreat.  
 He oped mine eyes and said, "Now cast thy glance  
 Of vision on that foul and ancient lake,  
 There where the murkiest clouds of smoke ad-  
 vance." 75

And as the frogs at sight of hostile snake  
 Are scattered through the waters far and wide,  
 Till, huddling, all the shore their refuge make,  
 More than a thousand ruined souls I spied  
 Thus fleeing from before the face of one, 80  
 Who with dry feet had crossed the Stygian tide.

the mystic meaning is which is to be read between the lines. It does not seem far to seek. In entering the city of Dis, the special home of the infidel and heretic, the pilgrim is brought into contact with the mystery of evil and its punishment, in its profoundest depths. The three Erinyes, types of the remorse of conscience (other allegorical and political interpretations have been found for them, as for the three beasts of C. i., which I do not care to discuss), strike terror into the soul; he quails before them. There remains a more terrible experience, the despair and unbelief that petrify the soul and make it callous. The higher human wisdom represented by Virgil protects Dante from that danger by hindering him from looking into the perilous depth of doubt. There is a point at which the contemplation of evil becomes fatal to the soul's life. Victory in that struggle can be obtained only by the help of the grace which comes from above, and of which the heavenly messenger of l. 85 is the symbol. We may fairly see in this instance an example of the profounder meanings which Dante read into the ancient myths of Greece, and apply his methods elsewhere.

<sup>67</sup> A striking parallel is found in Tennyson's *Princess*, in the passage beginning—

"As comes a pillar of electric cloud."

<sup>70</sup> The political interpreters see in the wind the symbol of the Emperor Henry VII., in the shepherds the clergy, and in the wild beasts the laity of Florence; but qu.?

<sup>76</sup> Frogs, like falcons, seem to have been a favourite study of Dante's. Comp. C. xxxii. 32.

He from his face swept that thick air and dun,  
 And often waved his left hand as he went,  
 And with that anguish seemed his strength half-gone.  
 Well I perceived that he from Heaven was sent; <sup>85</sup>  
 And to my Master turned, and he made sign  
 That I should silent stand before him bent.  
 Ah me! how full he seemed of scorn divine!  
 He reached the gate, and then, with wand in hand,  
 He oped it, nought withstanding his design. <sup>90</sup>  
 "Exiles from heaven, race for ever banned!"  
 So he began, that dreaded threshold o'er,  
 "Whence comes this proud resistance to command?  
 Why at that Will thus kick ye more and more,  
 Whose end ne'er fails its measure to fulfil, <sup>95</sup>  
 And oft hath added to your torments sore?  
 What boots it butting against Fate's strong will?  
 Your Cerberus, if you remember well,  
 For that bears chin and throat denuded still."  
 Then turned he back on that path foul and fell, <sup>100</sup>  
 And spoke no word to us, but had the mien  
 Of one in whom deep cares and carking dwell,  
 All else before him slighted and unseen.  
 We then towards that region took our path,  
 After those holy words, with soul serene. <sup>105</sup>  
 We passed within, and met no warring wrath;  
 And I, who had a strong desire to know  
 The state that such high fortress round it hath,  
 When I had entered, looked around, and lo!  
 I see on every side a wide champaign, <sup>110</sup>  
 Filled with sore torments and with bitterest woe.

<sup>83</sup> The action of the angel, like that of the Centaur in C. xii. 77, is described by one who has seen, as in the visions of God, what he thus describes. Mystically the action, which reminds us of Æneas with his *fatalis virga* (*Æn.* vi. 409), represents the fact that even the angels of God's grace find the conflict with evil no light or easy task. The political interpreters see in the angel the symbol of the Emperor Henry VII., in the resistance of the demons that which the citizens of Florence offered to that Emperor, in the angels turning back the Emperor's withdrawal. I leave it

As where the Rhone stagnates o'er Arli's plain,  
 Or as at Pola near Quarnaro's shore,  
 Italia's limit, bordered by the main,  
 With sepulchres the earth is studded o'er, 115  
 So rose they there on every side around,  
 Saving that here the fashion grieved me more ;  
 For flames were scattered o'er each burial mound,  
 Which set them all in such a fiery glow,  
 No art needs more in iron furnace found. 120  
 The lids were hung right o'er the tombs below,  
 And out of them there came such wailings loud,  
 They seemed of men tormented and in woe.  
 And I : " O Master, who then are that crowd 125  
 Who in these tombs thus sepulchred appear,  
 Whose sighs we hear as if in deep grief bowed ? "  
 And he to me : " Heresiarchs are they here,  
 With followers of all sects ; more numerous race  
 Than thou would'st deem, the laden tombstones bear.  
 Here like with like still finds its burial-place, 130  
 Some monuments more heated, others less."  
 And when he to the right had turned a space,  
 We passed where high towers on the tortures press.

to those who like to accept such an interpretation. I do not. It assumes of course that C. ix. was not written till after 1312, when the events occurred.

<sup>112</sup> Both the passages indicate actual observation. Arles may have been visited on the way to Paris before Dante's exile. Its outskirts, known as the Alys-champs (*Champs Elysées*), and used as a public promenade, form a vast necropolis, with long rows of Roman tombs on each side of an avenue (Joanne, *s. v. Arles*). Boccaccio speaks of a local tradition that there had been a great fight in the neighbourhood between the Christians and Saracens. Another more definite story was that Charlemagne had buried his dead there after a battle (Turpin, *Hist. Charles the Great*, i. 52), while a third legend stated that the Christian dead were distinguished by miracle from the unbelievers, and were found in their tombs, each with his name carved on that in which he lay (*Scart.*) Pola, a city of Istria, on the Gulf of Quarnaro, in the north of the Adriatic, was also memorable for the number of tombs, upwards of 700, in its outskirts. It was known as the limit of Italy, and contained an Amphitheatre, the Porta Aurea, and other Roman remains. Augustus had wished it to be called Pietas Julia, but the old name kept its ground (Ramp. *s. v. Pola*).

<sup>127</sup> The form of punishment is again appropriate. The heresiarch's life is but a living death, and therefore he is fitly entombed. But that death is not the cessation of conscious being, only of all that makes life worthy to be lived.

*The Epicureans—Farinata degli Uberti—Cavalcante de'  
Cavalcanti*

THEN onward goes, by narrow path that wound  
 Between the city's wall and tortured race,  
 My Master first, and I behind him found.  
 "O highest Might, who through each godless space,"  
 I then began, "as thou wilt, turnest me ; 5  
 Speak to me ; grant my longings, of thy grace.  
 The race who in these vaults sepulchral be,  
 May they be known ? already lifted high  
 Are all the lids, yet none on guard I see."  
 And he to me : "All of them closed shall lie 10  
 When from Jehoshaphat's dread vale they come,  
 Each with the body left beneath the sky.  
 On this side see, there lie within the tomb  
 All those who Epicurus take as guide,  
 Who make the spirit share the body's doom. 15  
 But thy desire shall soon be satisfied,  
 Both this which thou to me hast thus revealed,  
 And that thy wish thou dost in silence hide."  
 And I : "Good Master, I but keep concealed  
 From thee my heart, lest I speak more than meet ; 20  
 Not now alone hast thou my lips kept sealed."

<sup>1</sup> The scene which we have to picture to ourselves is that of a great cemetery just within the city, dark as night, and the flames issuing from the red-hot sepulchres. A midnight walk through the "Black Country" of the Midlands would in part reproduce it.

<sup>11</sup> Mediæval interpretation fastened on *Joel* iii. 2, and drew the inference that the valley of Jehoshaphat (= Jehovah judgeth), on the south side of Jerusalem, would be the actual scene of a localised last judgment.

<sup>14</sup> There is something singularly suggestive in the followers of Epicurus being placed among the heresiarchs. Dante clearly has in his mind, not the Athenian philosopher (though in one sense, as the founder of a school that wandered from the truth revealed to all men, he might be described by that name), but those who, being within the pale of the Church, had fallen back into pagan scepticism or unbelief. The way in which he looked on the Renaissance under Frederick II., against whom the charge of being "an Epicurean" was freely brought by his Papal opponents (*Kington* i. 371, 432 ; ii. 365), shows how he would have looked on the later Renaissance, the revival, *i.e.*, of heathenism in philosophy and art, under the Medici. The negation of immortality is that which seems to the poet a more deadly heresy than that of Arius or Sabellius.

"O Tuscan, who this city's fiery heat  
 Dost traverse with thy speech of courteous tone,  
 A little while stay with me, I entreat.  
 Thy speech and action have full plainly shown 25  
 Thou art a native of that noble land  
 To which perchance I was too troublous known."  
 All on a sudden came, as near at hand,  
 That voice from out a tomb, and so I turned  
 In dread, that I more near my Guide might 30  
 stand.  
 Then he to me : "Turn back : why thus concerned ?  
 'Tis Farinata whom thou see'st upraised ;  
 From his waist up his form is now discerned."  
 Already had I on him closely gazed,  
 And he with breast and neck before me rose, 35  
 As though in scorn Hell was by him appraised.  
 And then my Guide's hand, prompt and active, chose  
 To bid me to him 'mid the gravestones come,  
 Saying, "Let clear words now thy wish disclose."

25 The speaker, as l. 32 shows, is Farinata degli Uberti, a Ghibelline noble, who, in alliance with Arezzo, Pisa, and other partisans of the Empire, defeated the Guelphs of Florence, and among them Dante's kindred, in the battle of Montaperti, near the river Arbia, in 1260. Assuming that it is right for any human judgment to anticipate the Divine sentence, nothing can be more striking than the absence of partisanship and personal feeling with which in this instance Dante awards the doom of Farinata. The poet of Ghibellinism places a Ghibelline in the circle of the heresiarchs. In no other way, it may have seemed to him, could he teach the living Ghibellines with whom he associated that something more was needed for their salvation than hostility to the Pope. That hostility might be accompanied, as it had been in Farinata and others, under the influence of the imperial court of Frederick II., with a loss of all that raises man's life above the brutes ; with a denial, not of this or that article of the Church's faith, but of the fundamental idea of all natural religion. Boccaccio describes Farinata as being both an Epicurean and, in the more modern sense of the word, an epicure. That he was not without some nobler qualities which yet were unable to save, Dante, as the sequel shows, was not slow to recognise (comp. also C. vi. 79). It adds to the strange weird interest of the scene that Lapo, the son of Farinata, was a poet, and probably a friend of Dante's (*Sonn.* ii. ; *V. E.* i. 13) ; that his grandson Bonifazio wrote a poem, with the title of *Dittamondo*, a kind of itinerary of the then known world, based, in its form, on the pattern of the *Commedia* (see note on C. v. 67), and that his daughter was married to Guido Cavalcante. The fact that Margaritone of Arezzo executed a crucifix for him stands in almost ghastly contrast with Dante's picture (*Vas.* i. 90).



Soon as I reached the foot of his high tomb,  
 He looked at me awhile with scornful eye,  
 And asked me, "Whom art thou descended from?"  
 And I, who was all eager to comply,  
 Kept nothing from him, but the whole truth told;  
 Whereat he arched his eyebrows somewhat high,  
 And said, "Fierce foes were they in days of old  
 To me, my fathers and my party too,  
 So that twice o'er I drove them from our fold."  
 "If they were banished, they the way back knew,"  
 I answered, "once and twice from every side:  
 Thine have not learnt that art in measure due."  
 Then there arose a spectre just descried,  
 Uncovered downward only to the chin;  
 Kneeling, I trow, to lift himself he tried;

<sup>42</sup> The question is asked in the very spirit of the feudal, the Ghibelline, noble. To him the Guelphs, belonging mostly to the traders and the men of the professions, were objects of scorn. We can hardly doubt that Dante had encountered such scorn, and that the iron had entered into his soul, as he represents it here. In *Par.* xvii. he tells, with a natural pride, the story of his own lineage, but the proud noble was not likely to think much of Cacciaguida. Comp. the story of Giotto's asking the same question of a sitter who wished to be painted with a coat of arms (*Vas.* i. 121).

<sup>43</sup> The words refer to the two expulsions of the Guelphs of Florence by the Ghibellines: (1) in 1248, when they were driven into exile by Frederick II. (*Vill.* vi. 34); (2) in 1260, after Montaperti, as above. Dante's father was involved in the latter, but his mother, if not his father also, must have returned to Florence before his birth in 1265. In both cases, as Dante boasts, the exile was but short, the Guelphs returning from the first in 1250, after the rout of the Ghibellines at Figline, and from the second in 1266, after the death of Manfred. They in their turn, relying on the support of Charles of Anjou, banished their enemies (Farinata had died in 1264), and in the partial amnesty of 1267, the Uberti were specially exempted. The taunt was probably written after Dante had taken part in one or more attempts of the Ghibelline Bianchi, during the early years of his exile, to force their way back to Florence, and not without a touch of bitterness at their failure.

<sup>52</sup> The mention of "Guido" in l. 63 identifies the spectre with Cavalcante Cavalcanti, the father of Guido, one of the poet's earliest and dearest associates, the "first of his friends" (*V. N.* c. 3), a poet like himself, noble, brave, thoughtful, and refined (*Vill.* viii. 41; *Dino Comp.* i.). The two had been as David and Jonathan. Guido's father wonders at seeing Dante without him. And now the one speaks of the other after his death (Guido died in the autumn of 1360 after the assumed date of the vision, but before any of it was written) in a tone of coldness, and places his father in Hell as an unbeliever. What had caused the breach? If it is impossible to construct a complete *apologia*, we may at least trace the workings of the poet's mind. The father was a materialist, an "epicurean," and the son may have seemed to have

Round about me he looked, as if to win 55  
 Assurance whether others were with me ;  
 But when his anxious doubt all spent had been,  
 Then spake he weeping : " If 'tis thine to see  
 This prison dark, through loftiness of mind,  
 Where is my son ? Why comes he not with thee ? " 60  
 And I : " Not of myself the path I find ;  
 He who waits yonder leads me on my way.  
 May be, your Guido to his worth was blind."  
 Those words of his and doom that on him lay  
 Had of that soul already told the name, 65  
 Therefore so full did I my answer say.  
 Then swiftly rising up, he 'gan exclaim,  
 " ' *Was* ' didst thou say ? And lives he then no more ?  
 Are his eyes closed against the sun's sweet flame ? " 70  
 And when he noticed that I lingered o'er  
 My answer, back he fell as stupefied,  
 And his face hid, as it was hid before.  
 But he, that other, lofty in his pride,  
 For whom I stayed there, did unchanged remain ;  
 Neither his neck he moved, nor bent his side. 75

caught something of the taint. His marriage with Farinata's daughter would tend in the same direction. When Virgil came to be to Dante the guide to a higher life, to a truer theory of the Divine government, Guido, it may be, would none of him, and the breach between the two friends was therefore something more than a quarrel on a point of taste, Guido preferring the Provençal poets to the author of the *Æneid*. The change has its parallel in the altered feelings, let us say, with which a convert to or from Romanism or Protestantism looks on the friends whom he has left. What adds to the pain with which we read the whole story is, that Dante, in the two months in which he held office as one of the Priori in 1300, had felt himself compelled to banish Guido and others, both Neri and Bianchi, as disturbers of the peace of Florence, to Sarazana ; that his friend caught a fever there, and died in the autumn of the same year. Comp. *Purg.* xi. 97, as possibly alluding to him.

<sup>72</sup> The anguish of the father at hearing, as he thought, of his son's death, his loss of the "sweet light" of earth, reminds us of the rich man's anxiety in *Luke* xvi. 28 lest his brethren "should come into this place of torment."

<sup>73</sup> The fierce pride of the noble is not moved by the agony of his fellow-sufferer ; he is simply absorbed, in the selfishness which epicureanism brings with it, in the shame of the hopeless exile of his descendants. He, in his turn, uses the foresight given to the damned (l. 97-108) to prophesy Dante's own exile within fifty months (the "Queen" = Proserpine = Hecate = the moon) from the date of the vision, *i.e.*, before 1304. Dante was exiled in

"And if," then taking up his former strain,  
 He said, "they have that art so ill applied,  
 That more torments me than this bed of pain.  
 But, ere is kindled for the fiftieth tide  
 The bright face of the Queen who ruleth here, 80  
 How hard that art is thou too shalt have tried.  
 And if in that sweet world thou would'st appear,  
 Tell me why still that people is so stern  
 In every law against my lineage there?"  
 And I: "The carnage fierce that made them turn, 85  
 And bade the Arbia flow with crimsoned tide,  
 Makes them such prayers in our temple learn."  
 And when he shook his head, and therewith sighed,  
 "In that I stood not by myself," he said,  
 "Nor without cause with others took my side; 90  
 But by myself I stood when all were led  
 To bid Firenze's name and history cease,  
 And I in her defence raised dauntless head."  
 "Ah," prayed I, "by thy children's hopes of peace,  
 Do thou that dim perplexity make clear, 95  
 Which wraps my halting judgment, ill at ease.

January 1302. Two years more would teach him that it was not easy to return. Possibly the precise date may have been connected with some other fact, such as the attempt of the Cardinal da Prato to effect a peace between the Bianchi and Neri, in April 1304, the bearing of which on Dante's fortunes is now not clear.

<sup>82</sup> The Uberti were excluded by name in every edict of amnesty. As Dante answers, the slaughter of Montaperti was a thing never to be forgotten. The "prayers" refer either to actual litanies against the plots of the Uberti, or more probably to the decrees against them, which are so named in irony, as being passed by public assemblies held in the Church of St. John the Baptist. So Farinata's grandson, dwelling on his noble defence of Florence, pathetically adds—

"It is a marvel and a grief to me  
 To find its citizens so hard and stern  
 To children's children in the fourth degree."—*Fas.* ii. 28.

<sup>91</sup> Dante, at least, had not forgotten what half redeemed the character of the haughty unbelieving noble. The Ghibelline allies, the Pisans, the Siennese, the Guidi, the Uberti, met in council at Empoli after Montaperti. They were all ready to vote for the destruction of the Guelph democratic Florence. Farinata alone, in the spirit of one who, after all, loved his city more than his party, resisted and averted her destruction. *Comp. Sism. Rep. Ital.* iii. 245-348.



It seems that ye foresee, if right I hear,  
 What things, as time moves onward, shall arise,  
 And hold another course with things full near."  
 "We see," he said, "as one who hath dim eyes, 100  
 The things which yet are in the distance far ;  
 Such light the Sovran King to us supplies ;  
 But their approach or presence straight doth mar  
 Perception, and, unless by others told,  
 We nothing know how human fortunes are : 105  
 So thou may'st comprehend how dead and cold  
 Will be our knowledge from the self-same hour  
 When close the doors that now the future hold."  
 Then I, as one who felt compunction's power,  
 Said, "Tell, I pray thee, him who there doth lie 110  
 That still with us his son shares life's sweet dower ;  
 And if till now I mute was to reply,  
 Say it was only that my thoughts were still  
 Entangled in that knot thy words untie."

<sup>100</sup> We come across a curious speculation as to the mental activities of the dead. Ciacco and Farinata foretell the future. Cavalcante is ignorant of the present. What is the solution of the problem? That which is offered here seems to be that the souls of the departed, being no longer in contact with the world of sense, receive no knowledge of what is passing in it, but that, as spiritual beings, they trace, as long as time holds its course, the events that are passing from the sphere of the Divine foreknowledge into that of actuality. When time shall end, *i.e.*, at the last Judgment, as the close of the great æon, there will be no future events, and their knowledge will be limited to their own Eternal Now. So Aquinas limits the knowledge of the disembodied soul to *futura et universalia*. The Dante of the vision feels, in such a case, as he would have felt in the world, and apologises for the error which had misled him.

<sup>119</sup> The words bear witness to the existence, even prior to the later Renaissance, of a far larger spread of unbelief than we commonly associate with the 13th century. The *Monum. Franc. (App. p. 634)*, which reports discussions among philosophical students *utrum sit Deus?* tell a like tale. Foremost among the sceptics was the Emperor, who is here named, the enemy, not only of the Papacy, but of the faith of Christians. Popular legend connected his name with the saying, "*De tribus impostoribus*" (the three being Moses, Christ, Mahomet), and his court at Palermo was conspicuous for the laxity both of its faith and morals. As a Ghibelline partisan Dante might have glossed over the faults of an emperor whom he admired as a ruler, a patron of learning, and a poet (*V. E. i. 12*), and classed among those "*humana secuti, brutalia dedignantes*." As a Catholic, a Christian, and a man, he was constrained to hold him up to eternal infamy. See *Kington*, i. 476, ii. 123; *Church*, p. 119. *Comp. C. xiii. 59; Purg. iii. 113; Malisp. c. 107.*

And now, called back by my dear Master's will, 115  
     I prayed that spirit with more eager prayer  
     To tell me who with him that space did fill.  
 "More than a thousand," said he, "with me fare;  
     Within there Frederick, second of the name;  
     The Cardinal, and others whom I spare." 120  
 Then was he hid, and to that bard of fame  
     I turned my steps, revolving in my mind  
     That saying, which to me as hostile came.  
 He turned, and as he went, to me behind  
     He said, "Why art thou so disquieted?" 125  
     And I, as he had asked, the cause assigned.  
 "Let thy mind store what was against thee said,"  
     So spake my Master wise. "Now hear thou this,"  
     With lifted finger pointing on ahead,  
 "When thou shalt be before that light of bliss 130  
     Of her whose beauteous eye doth all survey,  
     Thy life's true journey then thou shalt not miss."  
 Then turned he to the left from that our way;  
     We left the wall, and to the middle wound,  
     By path that to a valley down doth stray, 135  
 Whence spread a foul and sickening stench around.

120 "*The Cardinal*," so spoken of *par excellence*, was Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, a contemporary of Farinata. He too was a Ghibelline, rich, powerful, luxurious. He had made a great feast after the defeat of the Florentine Guelphs at Montaperti. Like others, he had caught the taint of epicureanism, and was reported to have said that if man had a soul, he had lost his in the service of his party (*Malisp.* c. 103; *Kington*, ii. 454). He took his place also among the early writers of Italian poetry, and was notorious for his luxury and licence.

130 The light of bliss is, of course, Beatrice. The poet's plan seems, however, to have changed as he went on, and, as a matter of fact, he hears the story of his life from Cacciaguida, to whom she leads him (see *Par.* xvii. 7-30, where he refers to the grievous words of the present Canto).

*The Heresiarchs—Anastasius II.—Classification of Sins*

UPON the margin of a bank raised high,  
 Formed of great piles of broken rocks around,  
 We found a throng in yet worse misery;  
 And there, because that dread abyss profound  
 Sent forth its stench o'erwhelming far and wide, 5  
 A refuge we behind the cover found  
 Of a great tomb, where I a scroll descried,  
 Which said, "Pope Anastasius here I hold,  
 Whom from true path Photinus drew aside."  
 "Slowly our course adown the vale we hold, 10  
 Till that our sense a little trained hath grown  
 To that foul blast; then use will make us bold."  
 The Master thus; and I spake: "This alone  
 I ask, find some amends that time pass by  
 Not lost." And he: "Thou see'st I think thereon. 15

1-10 The valley into which the pilgrims descend is still part of the circle of the heretics. The stigma of heresy that attached to the name of Anastasius II. (d. 498) was connected with the question whether the name of Acacius, the Monophysite Bishop of Constantinople, should be struck out of the diptychs of the Greek Church as tainted with the heresy of Sabellius, as had been urged by his predecessor, Felix. The Pope formally presented a like request to the Emperor, also an Anastasius, but gave way on his refusal, and was content with the thought that Felix and Acacius were both before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge. The suspicion of heresy roused by this temporising policy was aggravated by his intercourse with Photinus, not the more conspicuous Sabellian of that name, who died in 376, but a deacon of Thessalia who was identified with the errors of Acacius. According to the traditions which were current in Dante's time, his life was cut short by a sudden death, like that of Arius in its circumstances, which was looked on as a Divine judgment (*Milman*, *L. C.* i. 349, and *Chron. of Polono*, quoted by *Scart*, and *D. C. B. s. v.*)

13 The request forms the starting-point for one of the episodes of theological ethics which occupy so prominent a place in the scheme of the *Commedia*. Dante seeks, as it were, to popularise the teaching of Aquinas, in which he himself had found light and guidance. He and his Guide are about to enter the circles of those who have sinned in other ways than that of carnal lust, or prodigality, or avarice, or direct heresy. The whole lecture that follows is an introduction to the three circles which are next to be visited, a dissertation on the different kinds and degrees of evil which are punished in them; the seventh, of sins of violence; the eighth, of the fraudulent, with its ten sub-circles of varied evil; the ninth, of the traitors. This seemed, as l. 20 shows, a more convenient method than that of a separate instruction at each circle. It is based, as Ozanam shows (p. 231), upon the teachings of Aquinas (*Summ.* i. qu. 84), as that in its turn was based upon the *Ethics*

My son, within these stones that broken lie  
 Three circles are there," he began to tell;  
 "From grade to grade, like those thou leav'st on high;  
 Filled full are they of spirits doomed to Hell.  
 But that henceforth it may suffice to see, 20  
 Hear how and why they lie in bondage fell.  
 In every sin that earns Heaven's enmity,  
 Men aim at wronging others, and that aim  
 By force or fraud works out the injury.  
 But because fraud is man's peculiar blame, 25  
 God hates it more, and therefore lower stand  
 The fraudulent, and suffer greater shame.  
 The outer circle holds the fiercer band;  
 But because force is threefold in its kind,  
 In threefold circles it is built and planned. 30  
 In God, ourselves, our neighbour, we may find  
 The wronged in person, or in what they own,  
 As thou shalt hear with cause full clear assigned.  
 Or death or grievous wounds in malice done,  
 Are 'gainst our neighbour's self; against his right 35  
 Are rapine, arson, foul extortion.  
 Hence murderers, and those who wound in spite,  
 Robbers and brigands, these, in torments all,  
 In the first round find each a separate site.  
 Again, man's force upon himself may fall, 40  
 Or on his goods; so in the second round  
 Remorse that profits not must him enthrall  
 Who of your world to rob himself is found,  
 Or gambles, or doth squander all he hath,  
 Or murmurs, where contentment should abound. 45

of Aristotle and the *Magna Moralia* of Gregory the Great (xxxi. 31). In the *Purg.* we have the more popular "seven sins" of the Church's system of Penance (Witte, *D. F.* ii. 121).

<sup>36</sup> The Italian for "extortion," *tollette* (tribute, tax), deserves a passing note as connected probably with the German *Zoll*, and finding its way into Italian from the oppressive rule of the German emperors. *Tolte* has, however, been suggested as a possible derivation. A *v. l.* gives *collette*, a word with the same meaning, but of Latin derivation.

Force also against God may work in wrath,  
 When men in heart blaspheme Him or deny,  
 Or swerve from Nature and her bounteous path.  
 Wherefore within the smallest circle lie  
 Cahors and Sodom, marked with brand of shame, <sup>50</sup>  
 And he who with his heart speaks blasphemy.  
 Fraud, that in every conscience worketh blame,  
 A man may work on him who gives him trust,  
 Or one who sees no ground to grant that same.  
 This latter mode but so far seems unjust <sup>55</sup>  
 That it the natural bond of friendship breaks;  
 So in the second circle here are thrust  
 The hypocrites, the flatterers, he who takes  
 Men's souls with spells, the thief, the simonist,  
 Sin's filthiest brood, corrupters, pimps, and rakes. <sup>60</sup>  
 But by the other mode that love is missed  
 Which Nature works, and that which with it blends,  
 And these a special confidence enlist.  
 Hence in the smallest circle that descends  
 To the world's centre, where Dis holds his throne, <sup>65</sup>  
 Such traitors lie in woe that never ends."  
 And I: "O Master, clear enough is shown

<sup>50</sup> Cahors, a city of France in the department of Lot, seems in the 13th century to have been the centre of banking operations on the part of the Fuggers or Rothschilds of the time, who had an evil reputation as usurers. Even in England, kings, prelates, and nobles were in their clutches. The name of Caorsine had become proverbially identified with "usurer" (Matt. Par. ad 1235; Bocc. Com. Ducange, s. v.). In John xxii. (1316) it gave Western Christendom a Pontiff stained with its characteristic vice (*Par.* xxvii. 58). The *rationale* of the combination of those of Cahors with the sin of the Cities of the Plain is given in ll. 109-111. For the circles of the violent we have: (1) The violent against others (C. xii.); (2) against themselves (C. xiii.); (3) against God (C. xiv.); (4) against Nature (C. xv., xvi.); and (5) against art (C. xvi.). The fraudulent occupy in an ever descending scale the ten pits of the Malebolge: (1) The seducers and panders (C. xvii.); (2) the flatterers (C. xviii.); (3) the simoniacs (C. xix.); (4) the soothsayers (C. xx.); (5) the speculators (C. xxii.); (6) the hypocrites (C. xxiii.); (7) the thieves (C. xxiv., xxv.); (8) the evil counsellors (C. xxvi., xxvii.); (9) the schismatics (C. xxviii.); (10) alchemists and forgers (C. xxix., xxx.). Lastly, in the ninth circle, we have: (1) Caina, for traitors to their kindred; (2) Antenora, for traitors to their country (C. xxxii.); (3) Ptolomea, for traitors to their friends (C. xxxiii.); (4) Giudecca, for traitors to their lords, the smallest and last of all the circles (C. xxxiv.).

Thy reasoning, and distinguishes aright  
 This pit and all it claimeth as its own.  
 But tell me, those within the lake's foul plight, 70  
   Whom the wind drives and whom the rainstorms beat,  
   And those who clash with words of sharpest spite,  
 Why dwell they not within this fiery seat,  
   Here punished, if beneath God's wrath they bide?  
   If not, why then such treatment do they meet?" 75  
 And he to me: "Oh, why thus turns aside  
   Thy wit to folly, as it never used?  
   Why to false issues is thy mind applied?  
 Dost not remember what thou hast perused,  
   The very words with which thine Ethics treat, 80  
   The threefold moods which stand of Heaven accused,—  
 Unbridled will, fixed evil, last we meet  
   Brutal excess, and how the unbridled will,  
   God, blaming less, with fewer stripes doth beat?  
 If thou this teaching but considerest still, 85  
   And call to thy remembrance who they are  
   Who higher up their penance dire fulfil,  
 Then thou wilt see why they are stationed far  
   From these offenders, why with torment less  
   The righteous strokes of God have power to mar." 90  
 "O Sun, who dost dim sight with healing bless,  
   Thou, when thou teachest, giv'st me such content,  
   That doubt and knowledge bring like happiness:

70 The poet states for others, and in order that he may solve it, a problem which had weighed on his own mind. Why were the sins of lust, the sins of Tristan and Francesca, and those of avarice and prodigality, in the higher circles, and not in those on which he was about to enter? He has found the solution in the law of habits set forth by Aristotle (*Eth. Nicom.* vii. 1), which classifies characters according to the degree of the hold the evil has on them: (1) *κακία*, incontinence, *i.e.*, the want of self-control; (2) *θηρίονης*, the state in which there is no longer any inner power to restrain or punish passion; (3) *ἀκρασία*, the brute-like state into which (2) ultimately develops itself. Latini's *Tesoro*, vi. 37, gives the classification which we find here. The works of Aristotle had been known in Bologna through Latin translations from the Arabic versions of Averrhoes, whose "great comment" is mentioned in C. iv. 144, and there probably, or through Brunetto, Dante studied it. Taught by him, he learnt to distinguish between the sins of impulsive sense, of inveterate habit, and of embruted callousness.



Once more," said I, "let thy glance back be bent,  
 There where thou said'st that usury offends 85  
 God's goodness ; now untie that knot's intent."  
 "Whoso," he said, "to Wisdom high attends,  
 Learns evermore, not here or there alone,  
 How Nature takes its methods and its ends  
 From God, whose Mind in skill and art is shown ; 100  
 And if thou hast thy Physics well in mind,  
 Thou'lt find, ere many pages thou hast known,  
 Your Art, as far as may be, close behind  
 Follows, as scholars near their teacher tread ;  
 So in your Art we may God's grandchild find. 105  
 By these two powers, if thou hast rightly read  
 The opening lore of Genesis, 'tis meet  
 The nations should in life's true course be led ;  
 And since elsewhere the usurer turns his feet,  
 Nature herself, and in her follower too, 110  
 He scorns, since elsewhere he his hope doth seat.  
 But follow now, for I would fain pursue  
 My course : the Fishes with the horizon blend,  
 Full over Caurus comes the Wain in view,  
 And far out yonder see the crags descend. 115

<sup>94</sup> Another question presents itself. In what sense is usury (the term, it will be remembered, as throughout the teaching of Scripture, included *all* interest on money, whatever its amount) rightly classed as a sin against Nature? Here the answer is found not in the *Ethics*, but in the *Physics* (ii. 2) of Aristotle ; that also had probably entered into his Bologna studies. The argument stands thus : True art, the art of man's labour in acquiring wealth, follows Nature, as Nature follows God. The natural law is stated in *Gen.* ii. 15. Man is to "eat bread in the sweat of his brow." Whatever gives man bread without labour, as interest on invested capital gives it, is against that law, "takes another way." Such, at any rate, was the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2, *qu.* 78) as well as of Dante. I do not discuss its soundness, and political economy, as a science, comes to a quite different conclusion. It is worth noting, however, (1) that Calvin was the first theologian of eminence who maintained the lawfulness of interest, (2) that Selden speaks of the teaching of Anglican divines as being on the other side (*Table-Talk*, s. v. Usury), and (3) that Dante's doctrine has recently been revived, with all his wonted power of diction, by Mr. Ruskin (*Usury and the English Bishops*, 1885).

<sup>113</sup> Of all the problems of the *Commedia*, those presented by such notices of time as this are among the most difficult to explain, and, except to the student of astronomy, the least interesting. It will, I think, be enough to



*The Minotaur—The Seventh Circle—Sins of Violence—The  
Centaur—The Tyrants*

THE place where down the bank our way we took,  
 Was alp-like, and the view that met us there,  
 Such that for fear each eye away would look.  
 So doth that ruin beyond Trent appear,  
 Which on the flank into the Adige dashed, 5  
 Through earthquake or through prop that failed to  
 bear;  
 For from the mountain-top whence down it crashed  
 E'en to the plain the rock so falls away,  
 That one above might climb o'er stones detached.  
 Such down that steep abyss was then our way; 10  
 And on the border of that break i' th' earth  
 The infamy of Crete extended lay,  
 Who from the false cow drew his monstrous birth;  
 And when he saw us, straight himself he bit,  
 As one all racked within by fiercest wrath. 15

state that the constellation known as the Fishes was in part below the horizon, as they would be at early dawn at the date of the Easter of 1300, when the sun was in Aries; that the Wain is the Charles's Wain (churl's or peasant's wain or waggon) of English speech, the Ursa Major of astronomers; that Caurus, as the Latin name for the north-west wind, indicates the western quarter of the heaven. All this seems a complicated way of describing daybreak on the morning of Easter Eve; but Dante, like Milton, was fond of showing that the poet could also be a man of science (*P. L.* viii. 1-150). Lubin, however, takes *Coro* as the name of one of the stars of the Great Bear.

<sup>5</sup> The scene referred to is probably that of the landslip known as the *Slavini* (= *precipice*) di *Marco* in the gorge of the Chiusa running from the Adige across the slopes of Mount Pastello. The landslip is described in the *History of Verona* by Della Corte as having happened in 1309, without either earthquake or tempest. The date makes it probable that Dante was at Verona at the time, and that the passage, if not the whole Canto, was written subsequently. One pictures the student-poet clambering down the steep descent, not without difficulty, and perhaps some fear, and its horrors reproduce themselves in his vision of Hell. Comp. *Hare*, i. 301.

<sup>12</sup> The "infamy of Crete" is, as in l. 25, the Minotaur, whose story hardly needs telling. The Athenian Duke is Theseus, one of whose earliest feats was the slaughter of the monster. The sister was Ariadne, who loved Theseus, and gave him the clue by which to thread his way through the labyrinth in which the monster had his home. The monster-form is the fit guardian of the circle of those who have allowed the brute element in them to overpower the human.

My Sage towards him shouted, "Seemeth it,  
 Perchance, that thou the Athenian Duke dost see,  
 Who sent thee from yon world to death's dark pit?  
 Avaunt, thou monster! not instructed he  
 By thy fair sister, now descends this way, 20  
 But comes to see your forms of penalty."  
 And as a bull, when comes the hour to slay,  
 Breaks loose as he receives the deadly wound,  
 And cannot walk, but wildly bounds away,  
 So in the Minotaur like act I found. 25  
 And he, when ware of it, cried, "On apace;  
 To the outlet, while he rages, get thee round."  
 So down the broken bank our way we trace,  
 Over the rocks that slipped at our advance  
 At the new load my feet did on them place. 30  
 I moved on, plunged in thought, and he: "Perchance,  
 Thou thinkest on this ruin where doth stand,  
 As guard, that brute whose wrath quailed at my glance:  
 Now 'tis my wish that thou shouldst understand,  
 That when I erst came down to this deep Hell, 35  
 This rock had not thus fallen o'er the land.  
 Yet but a little while, if I judge well,  
 Ere He came down who bore His spoil away  
 From Dis, where souls i' th' upper circle dwell:  
 On every side this deep foul vale that day 40  
 So shook, I thought the Universe had known  
 That Love by which—so there are some that say—

<sup>30</sup> The "new load" is the living form that now passed over the rocks which had hitherto been trodden only by the spectral shadows of the dead.

<sup>35</sup> The journey referred to is that of C. ix. 22, which was before the Crucifixion. The earthquake just before the descent into Hell was that of *Matt.* xxvii. 51, and is represented as having affected even the depths of the Inferno.

<sup>42</sup> The physical theory is that of Empedocles, who taught that the present condition of the material world was the result of a discord between the material atoms of which it was composed, which forced them into the present arrangements of the cosmos; and that from time to time the element of love supervened, bringing them into the union of a spherical chaos, out of which, in its turn, a new cosmos was evolved. See *Art. Empedocles* in *Dict. G. R. Biog.* Dante may have learnt the theory from

The world in chaos oft-times hath been thrown ;  
 And at that moment fell this ancient mass,  
 And here and there left many a heap of stone. 45  
 But fix thine eyes below ; for now we pass  
 The stream of blood wherein both boiling lie  
 Each soul that others wronged by force. Alas !  
 O blind desire, O fierce insanity,  
 Which spurs us on in this life's little span, 50  
 And, in the eternal, steeps in misery ! ”  
 Wide fosse I saw, which like a crescent ran,  
 As one which doth the whole wide plain embrace,  
 Ev'n as my Guide had told me of its plan ;  
 And 'twixt it and the bank's foot, each in trace 55  
 Of other, armed with arrows, Centaurs sped,  
 As in the world they used to go a-chase ;  
 And seeing us descend, each stayed his tread,  
 And from the troop detached, each with his bow  
 And arrows, three of them came on ahead ; 60  
 And one cried out from far, “ What doom of woe  
 Awaits you who descend this dreary shore ?  
 Speak where ye are, or else I draw the bow.”

the *Physics* of Aristotle (Ritter, *Anc. Phil.* v. c. 6), or from Cic. *de Amic.* c. vii.

47 The stream of blood is, of course, the fit symbol of a punishment like in kind to the crimes which are punished. We are reminded of the words of Tomyris as she cast the head of Cyrus into a vessel of blood : “ This thou didst thirst for ; now take thy fill of it ” (*Herod.* i. 214 ; *Purg.* xii. 56).

56 The Centaurs, half-man and half-horse, are chosen as symbolising the state in which the true nature of humanity is marred by its combination with the wild passions of the brute. Of the three who are named, Chiron appears in mythology as the son of Saturn, the “ most just ” (*Hom. Il.* xi. 831), the least brutalised, who trained Achilles to heroic deeds, Æsculapius in the art of medicine. Nessus, led to outrage by his passion for Deianira, gave her the garment, envenomed by his own blood, which caused the death of Hercules, and formed the subject of the *Trachinian Maidens* of Sophocles. Pholus was related to have interrupted the wedding feast of Peirithous and Hippodamia in the fierce violence of lust (*Purg.* xxiv. 121). In each of the three, Dante, we may believe, saw the type of the various degrees of deepening evil which come when the brute nature mars the completeness of the human life, beginning with half-genial animation and passing on into sheer ferocity (*Ruskin, F. C.* xxiv. 8-14). So the Centaur appears in Giotto's “ Obedience ” fresco at Assisi.

Then said my Master to them, "Answer more  
 We will to Chiron make, who standeth near ; 65  
 Ill sped for thee thy will so rash of yore."  
 Then touched he me and said, "See Nessus here,  
 Who for the beauteous Deianira bled,  
 And for himself wrought vengeance dire and drear.  
 He in the midst, who breastward bends his head, 70  
 Is Chiron great, who did Achilles train ;  
 The other Pholus, filled with anger dread.  
 Thousands the fosse skirt, thousands yet again,  
 Shooting at every soul that lifts its frame, [stain."  
 More than his guilt fits, from that blood-stream's 75  
 We to those swift-paced monsters nearer came,  
 And Chiron took a dart, and then he drew  
 Behind his jaws his beard back with the same ;  
 And when his great mouth bare appeared in view,  
 He said to his companions, "Do ye see 80  
 That he behind, in touching, moveth too ?  
 Not so a dead man's steps are wont to be."  
 And my good Guide, who now had reached the breast,  
 Where the two natures met in unity,  
 Answered, "He lives indeed ; 'tis my behest 85  
 To show to him alone this valley drear,  
 Not for delight, but by high fate imprest.  
 For One hath ceased her Alleluia clear  
 Who this new office hath to me assigned :  
 No robber he, nor felon stand I here ; 90

77 Ruskin's note on this passage, as showing that what Dante wrote was not, as with second-rate artists, the work of a deliberate invention, but the description of what he had actually seen, as in the visions of the night, is eminently characteristic (*M. P.* iii. 8).

85 The reader will remember the parallels as to the poet's mission in *C.* iii. 94, ix. 94. The general kindliness of the Centaurs, and specially of Chiron, seems to embody the thought that where the union of the man with the brute (as *e.g.*, in the case of savage races "who know not their Lord's will") is not the result of choice, there are capacities for good which may make them willing instruments alike for the punishment of evil and the help of good. Theirs is not a real *θηριότης* (= brutality), as a brutalised humanity is. (*Comp.* *C.* xi. 82, *Arist. Eth.* vii. 5.)

88 The "one" = Beatrice.

But, by that Power through whose protection kind  
 My footsteps move along this pathway fell,  
 Give us a guide, whom we may near us find,  
 To show us where the stream is fordable,  
 One on whose back this man may sit astride ; 95  
 No spirit he, through air to travel well."  
 Then Chiron turned towards his right-hand side,  
 And said to Nessus, "Take thou them, and lead :  
 If others check thee, bid them turn aside."  
 We then with trusty escort straight proceed 100  
 Along the edge of that red boiling stream,  
 Wherein those seething wailed each guilty deed.  
 Sunk to the eyebrows some of them did seem,  
 And the great Centaur said, "The tyrants these,  
 Who plunged in blood and rapine's worst extreme : 105  
 Their ruthless deeds they wail here, ill at ease.  
 See Alexander, Dionysius there,  
 Who vexed Sicilia with long cruelties.

107 The list of the tyrants of earth who are singled out from among thousands as types is interesting as furnishing data for a study of Dante's historical sympathies. (1) Alexander is probably not the Macedonian conqueror, but the Thessalian tyrant of Pheræ. Of the former Dante speaks elsewhere as "approaching to the type of a true universal monarchy" (*Mon.* ii. 9), as worthy of honour for his deeds of kingly goodness (*Conv.* iv. 11). On the other hand, Dante may have changed his estimate, and been influenced by his favourite, Lucan, who speaks (*Phars.* x. 19) of Alexander as the "*proles vesana Philippi*," and as a "*felix prædo*." (2) Dionysius the elder, tyrant of Syracuse, who oppressed Sicily B.C. 408-367. The "long cruelties," lit. "grievous years," reads like an echo of the "*tristes cædibus edidit annos*" of Statius, another of Dante's favourite poets (*Achill.* i. 80). (3) Azzolino (or Ezzelin) da Romano, tyrant of the Marca Trevigiana and Lombardy from 1230-60. Here also Dante condemns a Ghibelline. Ezzelin was son-in-law of Frederick II., and ruled his province as an Imperial vicar. Of all the tyrants of that evil time Ezzelin, known in popular legend as the Child of the Devil, was the most steeped in cruelties. Sismondi shrinks from telling the tale of his rapacity, his massacres, his fiendish tortures of his enemies. And his death was the fit close of such a life. Wounded and taken captive on his way to attack Milan, he was imprisoned at Soriano, refused all food and medical aid, sat for eleven days in gloomy silence, tore the bandages from his wound, and died (*Arrio.* ii. t. 2; *Sism. Republ. Ital.* c. xix.; *Kington*, i. 503, ii. 67, 309-312). It is interesting to note that the Cunizza of *Par.* ix. 31 was his sister, and that she was beloved by the Sor-dello of *Purg.* vi. 74. (4) Obizzo II. of Este, on the other hand, was a Guelph leader, Marquis of Ferrara and Ancona from 1264-93, and was therefore a contemporary of Dante's, and by his marriage in 1269 with the

That forehead there, o'erhung with swarthy hair,  
 Is Azzolino, and that other head 110  
 Is Obizzo of Esti's visage fair,  
 Whose blood on earth was by his stepson shed."  
 Then turned I to the Poet and he spake,  
 "Let him before thee, I behind thee, tread."  
 Soon as we walked, I saw the Centaur make 115  
 A halt hard by a race that plunged were shown  
 To the throat, then rose from out that bubbling lake.  
 A shade he showed us, on one side, alone,  
 And said, "In God's own lap he pierced the heart  
 Which, held in honour, on the Thames is known." 120  
 Then I saw those who all their upper part  
 Above the river held, both chest and head;  
 Of many, memories in my mind did start.  
 So step by step the depth diminishèd  
 Of that blood-stream, till but the feet were wet, 125  
 And there from out the fosse our passage led.

daughter of Alberto della Scala was brother-in-law to Dante's patron Can Grande. The dominant belief of the time was that his eldest son, alone or with his next brother, had assassinated him because he had left the lordship of Ferrara to his third and favourite son. This is the meaning of the "stepson" which is used to describe him (*Arrio*. i. 1; *Kington*, ii. 310).

117 The degrees of immersion in the blood-river correspond to the degrees of guilt.

118 The passage is one of the few in the *Commedia* which bring us into contact with English history (comp. *Purg.* vii. 131). The murderer is Guido, or Guy, de Montfort, son of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. The date is 1271, six years after the defeat and death of the father at the battle of Evesham. The victim is Henry, son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the brother of Henry III., afterwards a candidate for the Empire. The scene is at Viterbo, where the cardinals were assembled for the election of a Pope as successor to Clement IV. The prince was attending mass in the church of S. Silvestro, and as he was in the act of receiving the host, was stabbed by the assassin, and his body dragged by the hair into the open street. It was afterwards embalmed and deposited in the abbey of Hayles in Gloucestershire; but the heart, enclosed in a golden vase, was placed on the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, and thus was "held in honour on the Thames" (*Barlow*, p. 124). The passage takes its place, as I have shown elsewhere (*Contemp. Rev.* Dec. 1881), in the evidence which shows that Dante probably visited London and Oxford as well as Paris (*Par.* x. 136), Cologne (*C.* xxiii. 63), and Bruges (*Inf.* xv. 4). It is noticeable that the same fact is referred to in the *Dittamondo* of Fazio degli Uberti, ii. 29.



"As on this side the stream thine eye hath met  
 Still lessening in its depth of seething blood,"  
 The Centaur said, "but thou must not forget  
 That on the other deepens still its flood 130  
 Till its bed comes at last full round again,  
 Where in fit penance wails the tyrant brood.  
 There God's great justice smites with ceaseless pain  
 That Attila who was the earth's great scourge,  
 Pyrrhus and Sextus, and doth still constrain 135  
 The tears it draws forth with its seething surge  
 In Pazzo and Corneto, each Rinier,  
 Who on the roads war's havoc dread did urge."  
 Then turned he back and crossed the shallows near.

133 The mention of Attila, who is described by the name which he gave himself as being "the scourge of God," is probably connected with the tradition which Dante seems to have believed, that Florence had been laid waste by him (C. xiii. 149).

135 Doubts have been raised by commentators, but there can scarcely be any question that the Pyrrhus named here is the King of Epirus, and the Sextus the son of Pompeius. As regards the last, Dante may have had in his mind the line of Lucan (vi. 113)—

*"Polluit æquoreos Siculus hirsuta triumphos."*

137 Again we have the Ghibelline poet condemning the sins of his own party. The Rinier of Corneto, in the Maremma, near Viterbo, seems to have been one of the old feudal lords who were the curse of Italy, issuing from their rock strongholds to plunder merchants, ravage villages, and checking the growing prosperity of towns. Lubin identifies him with the father of Dante's friend and protector, Uguccione della Faggiuola, who was named Rinier, and had a castle at Corneto. Rinier Pazzo comes into closer contact with Dante's history. His castle was in the Val d'Arno, between Florence and Arezzo, and the former city passed laws to restrain his depredations. Both were said to have been employed by Frederick II. (1228) to rob the Roman bishops, and the latter was excommunicated by Clement IV. in 1269 (*Ott.*).



*The Forest of Suicides—The Harpies—Pier della Vigne—Lano  
of Siena—Jacopo da Sant' Andrea*

Nor yet had Nessus reached the farther shore,  
 When we within a wood an entrance found,  
 By not one single pathway traversed o'er ;  
 Not green the leaves, but of a hue embrowned,  
 Nor smooth the boughs, but gnarled and intertwined, <sup>5</sup>  
 No fruit, but thorns that poison as they wound.  
 Thickets so wild and dense they do not find,  
 Those beasts of prey which cultured regions hate,  
 Where Cecin's streams beyond Corneto wind.  
 There the foul Harpies made their nest and sate, <sup>10</sup>  
 Who from the Strophades the Trojans drove  
 With warnings sad of coming evil fate ;  
 Wide wings have they, a human face above,  
 Claws on their feet, their paunch all feather'd  
                   o'er,  
 And their wild wailings fill the wondrous grove. <sup>15</sup>  
 And my good Master : " Ere thou enter more,  
 Know thou art in the second circle's pale,"  
 So said he, " and shalt be till thou the shore  
 Shalt reach where horrid sand fills all the vale.  
 Therefore look well around, and thou shalt see <sup>20</sup>  
 Things that might shake thy credence in my tale."

<sup>2</sup> The description that follows, and the thought of the souls that form the trees in the dense forest, are manifestly reproduced from the story of Polydorus and the Harpies in *Æn.* iii. 19-68. The reference to the "*auri sacri fames*" of *Æn.* iii. 57 in *Purg.* xxii. 40 shows how much that part of Virgil's poem had impressed itself on Dante's mind. The mention of Corneto indicates a sequence of thought with the closing lines of the preceding canto. The Cecina is a river flowing into the sea a little south of Leghorn, and, with the Marta, on which Corneto stands, encloses the wild gloomy region of the Maremma, which, with its swamps, its miasma (*C.* xxix. 48), and its wild boars and serpents (*C.* xxv. 19), seemed to Dante the type of an almost infernal desolation. The Harpies are taken by some interpreters as symbols of remorse ; but qu. ?

<sup>17</sup> The second circle is, as has been said in the note on *C.* xi. 40, that of the self-murderers.

<sup>21</sup> *A v. l.* gives "things that would gain thy credence," but the text is preferable.

On all sides round deep groans of misery  
I heard, yet saw no forms from which they came ;  
Wherefore I stopped in sore perplexity.  
I think he thought that I thought of the same, 25  
That from amid those trunks, from many a throat,  
Came voice of those who hid themselves for shame.  
Wherefore my Master said, "If thou take note  
What comes, if thou one bough of these trees break,  
Then will thy thoughts as baseless error float." 30  
Then stretched I somewhat forth my hand to take,  
And plucked a branch from off a tall thorn tree,  
And the trunk cried, "Why this dire mangling  
make?"  
And when with blood it was embrowned to see,  
He cried again, "Why dost thou rend me so? 35  
Doth nought of pity's spirit dwell in thee?  
Men were we once, now here as trees we grow;  
But were we souls sprung from the viper's brood,  
Thy reckless hand might well more pity show."  
As when one burns a brand of greenest wood 40  
At one end, and the other spits and groans  
And hisses, as the air and damp exude,  
So from that broken stem came mingled tones  
Of words and blood; and so I let the bough  
Fall, and stood there, fear shaking all my bones. 45  
"Had he been able to believe ere now,"  
My Sage made answer, "O thou wounded soul,  
What thus he sees, as my verse taught him how,  
He had withheld his hand and left thee whole;  
But the surpassing marvel made me lead 50  
His mind to that which fills me now with dole.

<sup>25</sup> The introspective thought-reading is eminently characteristic of the subtle play of the consciousness of a poet of the first order, just as the similitude of l. 40 is of the imagination which seeks for similes, not as ornaments, but as the fittest illustrations of what the poet's inner eye had actually seen.

<sup>31</sup> The action and its sequel are identical with those of *Æn.* iii. 25.

But tell him who thou wert, that he his deed  
 Atone for, by reviving there thy fame  
 Where he may soon with backward steps proceed." 55  
 "So charm thy sweetwords," from the trunk there came  
 The cry, "I cannot hold my peace, and ye,  
 If I am somewhat prolix, spare your blame.  
 None other I than he who held each key  
 Of Frederick's heart, and turned them to and fro,  
 Locking, unlocking, with such subtlety, 60  
 That to none else his secrets would he show;  
 And my high task I wrought with zeal so true,  
 Pulse ceased to beat, nor did I slumber know.  
 The harlot who her lewd eyes ne'er withdrew  
 From the high palace of the Cæsar's state 65  
 (The common bane and vice of courts she grew),  
 Inflamed all minds against me with fierce hate,  
 And they inflamed, Augustus so inflamed,  
 That joyous honour turned to sorrows great,

57 The story is one of the saddest in the whole poem. Dante's mind seems to have been haunted by it, as by all the other miseries and crimes which he associated with the reign of Frederick II., as that which had marred the ideal of a true empire and tainted the whole life of Italy. The speaker is Pier della Vigne, the chancellor of that Emperor. The son of a vinedresser of Capua, he had studied civil law at Bologna, and had risen to a high place in his master's favour as a counsellor during his long struggle with the Papacy, and was also a poet—an Italian poet—of no mean order. The jealousy of other courtiers prompted them to lying slanders, and it was whispered that he betrayed the Emperor's secrets to the Pope, and that he had conspired with his enemies to poison him. Frederick believed the charges, blinded him by compelling him to hold his face over red-hot iron, and threw him into prison at Pisa, where, according to the register of the New Hospital in the archives of that city, he anticipated the death by stoning to which he had been destined, by dashing his head against the wall of his dungeon (*Scart.*; *Kington*, ii. 478-503; *Sism. H. R. I.* iii. 79). Dante, in this instance, while his stern theology makes him condemn the suicide, with no thought of a verdict of "temporary insanity," is stirred by his profound pity to vindicate the character of the man who had thus been done to death by slanderous tongues. The passage is memorable as having been reproduced by Chaucer (Prol. to *Legend of Good Women*)—

"Envie is lavender of the court alway,  
 For she ne parteth, neither night nor day,  
 Out of the house of Cæsar, thus saith Dant."

Chaucer's "lavender" = *lavandiere*, a euphemism for Dante's *meretrice*.

And my proud soul, that scorned to live so shamed, 70  
     Thinking by death to 'scape the pangs of scorn,  
     Made me blameworthy, 'gainst myself unblamed.  
 By the root-fibres of this tree new-born,  
     I swear to you that faith I never brake  
     Towards my lord, whom all good did adorn. 75  
 If one of you his upward journey take,  
     Let him redeem my memory, which lies  
     Sore smitten, nor from envy's blow can wake."  
 He paused, then "Seize the moment ere it flies,"  
     The Poet said, "since he is silent now; 80  
     Speak and ask more as thoughts within thee rise."  
 And I to him replied, "Nay, question thou  
     Of what thou think'st my wish will satisfy;  
     Such pity moves me, that I know not how."  
 Then he began: "So may the man comply 85  
     With liberal will in all thy words beseech,  
     Imprisoned soul, as thou wilt in reply  
 The manner of the soul's confinement teach  
     In these gnarled trunks, and tell us, if thou may,  
     If any from such limbs doth freedom reach." 90  
 Then sighed the sturdy trunk, and lo! straightway  
     That whistling wind was turned to voice of man.  
     "With briefest word I will mine answer say.  
 When the fierce spirit quitteth," he began,  
     "The body which in wrath it left behind, 95  
     Then Minos sends it to the seventh pit's span;  
 Into the wood it falls, no place assigned,  
     But there, where Fortune speeds its arrow's chance,  
     Like grain of spelt, it buds from out its rind,

75 The testimony to the noble qualities of Frederick, which might have made him the saviour of Italy, had they not been marred by his sensuality and unbelief, agrees with the *V. E.* i. 12, where he speaks of the "nobility and righteousness" of him and of his son Manfred, and of both as "*humana secuti, brutalia dedignantes*." Even in those in whom evil triumphed he recognised the vestiges of a better nature. In this instance the exiled poet spoke as a fellow sufferer, whose character had been blackened by the "envy" of his political opponents.

And its young shoots to forest tree advance : 100  
 The Harpies then its tender leaves devour,  
 Wound, and an outlet make for utterance.  
 We, like the rest, shall come in judgment's hour,  
 To seek but not resume, our earthly dress ;  
 O'er what he casts away man loses power. 105  
 These we shall drag, and through this wilderness  
 So drear each tree its several corpse shall bear,  
 Hung on the thorn of soul in sharp distress."  
 Still to that trunk we gave a listening ear,  
 Thinking that yet he fain would further speak, 110  
 When we a tumult new and strange did hear.  
 As one who stands where dogs the wild boar seek,  
 And hears them rushing wildly on their prey,  
 The crash of beasts and branches which they break,  
 Lo ! through the space that on our left hand lay, 115  
 Two nude and wounded forms sped on so fast,  
 They broke the tangled boughs that stopped their  
 way.  
 The foremost cried, "O hasten, Death, O haste !"  
 The other then, whose pace seemed somewhat slow,  
 Cried, "Lano, not so quick and nimble-paced 120

<sup>102</sup> The thought of the strange transformation, in which one traces the student of Ovid, as in the serpent metamorphoses of C. xxiv., seems to be that the miseries of the lost souls only found utterance when a branch was broken either by the Harpies or by the hands of others.

<sup>115</sup> The history of the "two naked forms" may be briefly told. (1) Lano (diminutive of Ercolano) was of Siena, the companion of the rich voluptuaries of C. xxix. 110-138, and with them wasted his substance in riotous living. When the Siennese were defeated by the Aretines in a skirmish at Pieve del Toppo, near Arezzo, he threw himself into the ranks of the enemy, seeking death rather than endure the poverty which awaited him at home (*Bocc. Com.*). (2) Jacopo of S. Andrea was in like evil repute at Padua, and strange stories were told of his wanton prodigality, flinging gold coins into the sea at Venice, burning one of his own villas that he might see a fire, or a peasant's cottage that he might warm himself on his return from hunting. Both the sinners belong, of course, to another class than the self-murderers, and are among those who, as in C. xi. 41, have destroyed not their life, but their means of living. The sneer in l. 121 may perhaps imply that, after all, he was somewhat slow in his movement, whether of attack or flight. It has been suggested that the black dogs are probably symbols of the creditors of the two prodigals.

Thy legs, when thou to Toppo's jousts did'st go ;"  
 And then, perchance because his breath did fail,  
 Himself one group made with the bush below.  
 Behind them dogs through all the woodland vale  
 Ranged far and wide, black, fierce, of swiftest tread, <sup>125</sup>  
 As greyhounds from the leash their foe assail.  
 Him who there crouched they bit until he bled,  
 And limb by limb with fangs relentless tore,  
 And then bore off the fragments raw and red.  
 And then my Guide, my hand by his clasped o'er, <sup>130</sup>  
 Led me to that same bush, whence vain sighs broke  
 From out its broken branches, bleeding sore.  
 "Jacopo of Sant' Andrea," so he spake,  
 "What helped it thee to make of me a screen ?  
 What blame on me falls for thy foul life's sake ?" <sup>135</sup>  
 And when my Guide o'er him erect was seen,  
 He said, "Who wert thou, who from many a pore  
 Thy dolorous speech sigh'st out with blood between?"  
 And he to us : "O souls, who to this shore  
 Have come to see the deed of foulest shame <sup>140</sup>  
 Which from my trunk my leaves and branches tore,  
 At foot of this sad bush collect the same :  
 I of that city was that chose as lord  
 The Baptist, whence her lord of earlier fame

<sup>143</sup> The unnamed suicide has been conjecturally identified : (1) with a judge of the Agli family, who, having been condemned for a corrupt judgment, hung himself, as in l. 151, in his own house ; (2) with a Rocco de Mozzi, a rich man whose excesses brought him to poverty and drove him to suicide. The passage depends for its significance on a knowledge of the early history of Florence. Mars, it was said, had been of old its tutelary god, and his temple forms the substructure of the present Baptistery. When the Empire became Christian, Florence took St. John the Baptist as its patron saint, and the image of Mars was placed as a kind of historical palladium in a tower near the Arno. When the city was laid waste by Totila (whom Dante confuses with Attila) in 450, it was thrown into the Arno ; recovered when Charlemagne rebuilt the city, and placed on the Ponte Vecchio. In 1078 the bridge was carried away by a flood, and the statue fell into the river, was recovered and replaced in 1218, and finally disappeared in another flood in 1333. As long as it remained there was an annual festival in its honour (*Gui. Pis.*), and it was decked with wreaths of flowers. The whole passage is full of a concentrated sarcasm. What is really meant is that the Florentines worshipped not the Baptist, but his



Still mars her peace with all his art abhorred ; 145  
 And were there not, where men the Arno pass,  
 Some image of him still all duly stored,  
 Those citizens who raised it from the mass  
 Of ashes left by Attila the dread,  
 In vain had spent their time and toil. Alas ! 150  
 I of my house myself my gallows made."

## CANTO XIV

*The Desert of Fiery Sand—The Violent against God—The  
 Grand Old Form in Crete*

I, FORASMUCH as love for my dear land  
 Constrained me, gathered up the scattered leaves,  
 And gave them back to him, who hoarse did stand.  
 Then came we where the circle third receives  
 Division from the second ; there we saw 5  
 The dread devices righteous Wrath conceives.  
 To make full clear those matters of new awe,  
 I say that we had reached a wide waste plain,  
 Where from its bed no plants their nurture draw ;  
 The dolorous wood engarlands that champaign, 10  
 E'en as that wood the drear fosse hemmeth in ;  
 There stayed we on the borders of the twain,  
 All sand, deep, dry, and fine the soil within,  
 No other in its kind than that of old  
 Where Cato's footsteps did an entrance win. 15

image on their coins : that they were continually engaged in wars, foreign and civil ; and that happily there was yet a remnant of the Mars spirit among them to counteract their Mammon-worship ; without that, with all its evils, their city would have perished utterly. Comp. Latini, *Trés.* in *Ort.* p. 30.  
<sup>1</sup> Comp. C. xiii. 143. The unnamed soul had the claims of a fellow citizen.

<sup>5</sup> The sin now in view is that of the violent against God, the sin of open blasphemy and defiance, of whom Capaneus is the only representative instance.

<sup>15</sup> Dante refers to the history of Cato's march through the Libyan desert, as given in his favourite Lucan (*Phars.* ix. 379-497).



Vengeance of God ! what fear of thee should hold  
 The soul of every man who readeth here  
 That which these eyes of mine did then behold !  
 Large herds of naked spirits saw I there,  
 Who wailed their evil fate full piteously, 20  
 And each a different sentence seemed to bear.  
 Supine upon the ground one group did lie,  
 Another sat all gathered up and squat,  
 A third unceasing to and fro did ply,  
 The greater part thus moving had their lot, 25  
 The fewest those who in their torments lay,  
 But for their grief a looser tongue had got.  
 And over all the sand a falling spray  
 Showered rain of flakes of ever-spreading flame,  
 Like snow upon the Alps on windless day. 30  
 E'en so when Alexander's armies came  
 To India's torrid climes, upon his host  
 The fire-showers fell, and earth received the same ;  
 And so his troops he sent o'er all the coast  
 To plough it up, because the fiery rain 35  
 Left to itself was better quenched and lost.

19 This is the first mention, since C. iii. 100, of the nakedness of the lost souls, but the fact must be assumed throughout.

22-24 The three lines indicate the three grades of evil, each with its own appropriate penalty. Those who had defied Heaven lie prostrate on the earth with upturned faces ; the usurers sit as they used to sit of old, crouching over their money-counters ; the sinners against nature are tormented by the same restless impulses as those whom he had seen, as in C. v. 31, suffering the doom of a less hateful form of sensual evil, but under far more terrible conditions. They had "burnt" in their lusts before, now they are punished by the fiery rain. *Comp. Gen. xix. 24.*

30 Another trace of distant wanderings, probably on the journey to Arles, implied in C. ix. 112, or to Paris (*Par. x. 136*). The word "Alp" is probably to be taken in its widest sense, of any lofty mountain.

31 The tradition is found in a letter purporting to be written by Alexander to Aristotle, given by Albertus Magnus and Benv. da Imola. The latter narrates two perils, one from a tremendous snowstorm which threatened to cover the whole camp, so that Alexander gave orders to his troops to tread it down by constant marching : the other from falling flames of fire, against which they protected themselves with their clothes. Dante apparently mixes up the two facts in his memory (*Scart.*).

So fell the eternal burning on the plain,  
 And so the sand was set on fire, and glowed,  
 Like tinder 'neath the steel, so doubling pain.  
 Unceasing still their restless gestures showed, 40  
 Of wretched hands, on left side and on right,  
 Still flinging off the ever-burning load.  
 I then began : "O Master, thou whose might  
 Prevails o'er all except those demons stern, 45  
 Who at the gateway's entrance met our sight,  
 Who is that great one who scarce cares to turn  
 Back from the fire, and lies in scornful pride,  
 So that the rain scarce seems his flesh to burn ?"  
 And then that same one, who had quick descried 50  
 That I had asked my Guide about his name,  
 "What I was living, dead now am I," cried.  
 "Though Jove should weary out his craftsman lame,  
 From whom in wrath his thunderbolt he bare,  
 Smitten by which, to my last day I came, 55  
 And weary out, in turn, the others there,  
 At Mongibello in their smithy's gloom,  
 Crying, 'Good Vulcan, help, O help us, hear !'—  
 E'en as he did at Phlegra's field of doom,—  
 And hurled his darts at me with all his might, 60  
 No joy of vengeance should his soul illumine."  
 Then spake my Guide, voice raised to such a height,  
 That never so till then I heard him speak,  
 "O Capaneus, because thy pride and spite

40 The word used for "game" (*tresca*) seems to have been specially used of a Neapolitan pantomimic dance, in which hands and feet were in perpetual movement. A cognate verb is found in *Purg.* x. 65.

56 Vulcan, who was cast into Hell by Jupiter for having forged his thunderbolts for his enemies, and who gave his name to the Volcano of Ætna, where he and his workmen, the Cyclops, were said to be imprisoned—

"*Vulcani domus et Vulcania nomine tellus.*"—*Æn.* viii. 416.

Mongibello, a Sicilian name for Ætna, was probably a corruption of the Italian *Monte* and the Arabic *Djebel* (=mountain).

58 Phlegra, in Thessaly, the scene of the war of the Titans, who fought against Jupiter and were smitten by him.

63 Capaneus, one of the "Seven against Thebes" of Æschylus (*S. c. Th.*)

Are still unquenched, more torments on thee break ;  
 All anguish, but thine own exceeding rage, 65  
 Would for thy wrath be penalty too weak."  
 Then with a voice whose tones he did assuage,  
 He turned and said, " This man was of the Seven  
 Who Thebes besieged, and waged, and yet doth wage,  
 Fierce war 'gainst God, and little cares for Heaven ; 70  
 But, as I said to him, his passion's heat  
 To him fit badge for such a heart is given.  
 Now follow me, and set not thou thy feet  
 Where the sand burneth hot, thy way to wend,  
 But ever near the woodland seek retreat." 75  
 Silent we passed to where the waters send  
 Forth from the wood a tiny rivulet,  
 Whose crimson hue still sets my hair on end.  
 As flows the stream at Bulicame met,  
 Which sinful women then at will divide, 80  
 Down through the sand that river's course was set,  
 Its bottom and steep banks on either side  
 And margins broad were made throughout of stone,  
 Whence I discerned the pass must there be tried.  
 " Of all the rest that I to thee have shown 85  
 Since we our entrance found within the gate  
 Whose open threshold is denied to none,  
 Ne'er by thine eyes was seen a wonder great  
 And notable as is this river here,  
 Which all the flamelets doth annihilate." 90

420) and Euripides (*Phæn.* 1179). Dante probably drew his knowledge from Statius (*Theb.* x. 821). The thought expressed in l. 65 implies the profound truth that sin is its own worst punishment.

80 Bulicame, a mineral spring near Viterbo (Gregory IX. had gone there as a patient just before his death in 1241, *Kington*, ii. 254), the baths of which were frequented, as such places commonly were (hence the secondary meaning of *bagnio*), by women of ill-fame. Ciampi (*Munic. Ital.* Rome, 1865) quotes a curious edict of the commune of Viterbo in 1464, ordering these women to keep to Bulicame, and not to come into the town (*Scart.*). The ruins of the bath of Ser Paolo Benigno still stand between Bulicame and the town (*Barlow*, p. 129). The description implies that the stream flowed through an artificial channel into the establishment, and was thence

These words my Master whispered in mine ear,  
 Therefore I prayed that he would grant the food  
 For which he granted appetite to hear.  
 "In the mid-sea there lies in solitude,"  
 He spake, "an island waste men know as Crete, 95  
 Under whose king the world in pureness stood.  
 A mountain rises, once the pleasant seat  
 Of streams and bowers, by Ida's name it goes ;  
 A desert now, as something obsolete.  
 That mount, as cradle safe, once Rhea chose 100  
 For her young child, and, better to conceal,  
 Whene'er he cried, great shoutings round him rose.  
 The mountain depths an old man's form reveal,  
 Which turns its back on Damietta old  
 And still to Rome, as mirror, makes appeal. 105  
 Its head is fashioned all of purest gold,  
 Of silver pure its arms are, and its breast ;  
 Then to the loins brass doth its form enfold,

distributed in the baths. The rivulet which is compared to Bulicame is Phlegethon, the fiery river of *Æn.* vi. 551.

94-120 The episode is the first instance in the *Comm.* of a distinctly historical symbolism, after the manner of the visions of Daniel (ii.-iv.) and St. John, and embodies the poet's thoughts of a philosophy of history. Crete is named as the cradle of the Trojan (*Æn.* iii. 105), and therefore of the Roman people (*Æn.* iii. 104), and was occupied in Dante's time by the Venetians. The king is the Saturn of the Golden Age (*Æn.* viii. 319). Saturn (symbol perhaps of time) devours his children, and Rhea (= Cybele = the Earth-Goddess) sends her new-born son (Jupiter) to a cavern of Mount Ida, where her priests, the Curetes, drown the child's cries with their shouts and cymbals. The "grand old form" is the symbol of the ideal of universal history as seen in the Roman Empire. He looks away from Damietta on the eastern border of Egypt, *i.e.*, westward, for that, from the poet's standpoint, is the direction of human progress. Possibly there is a side-glance at the fact that the time of the Crusades, in which Damietta had played so prominent a part, is now over, and that the work of the Empire now lay in the West rather than the East (*Ozan.* 108). He looks towards Rome as a mirror, for it is there only, as Dante thought, as the seat of a true Empire and a true Church, that his ideal of monarchy could be realised (*Mon.* ii. ; *Conv.* iv. 5). For another apocalyptic vision of the same type, comp. *Purg.* xxxii. There was another Damietta in Syria near Acre, which was destroyed by the Egyptians in the age of the Crusades, but the question which of the two Dante meant does not affect the symbolism.

106 The form of the symbolism comes from *Dan.* ii. 31-33, but the interpretation is different. Here we have, not the succession of monarchies, but the classical *mythos* of the four ages of gold, and silver, and bronze, and

Then downward choicest iron is all the rest,  
 Save that the right foot is of kiln-baked clay, 110  
 And his chief weight upon that foot is pressed.  
 Each part, the gold excepted, doth display  
 A fissure, whence flow ever-dripping tears,  
 Which, gathering, through that cavern pierce their  
 way.  
 From rock to rock the stream this valley nears, 115  
 And Acheron forms, and Styx, and Phlegethon,  
 And hence down through this narrow sluice careers,  
 Till it arrives where more descent is none,  
 And forms Cocytus. What that pool may be  
 Thyself shalt see—more needs not now be shown.” 120  
 And I to him : “ This streamlet that we see,  
 Why, if it floweth from our world above,  
 On this bank only shows it visibly ? ”  
 And he to me : “ Thou know’st that thou dost move  
 As circling round, and, far though thou hast sped, 125  
 Still to the left down-sloping, as we rove,  
 Not yet hast thou the whole encompassèd ;  
 Wherefore, if thou see’st things all strange and new,  
 No wonder need upon thy face be read.”

iron, as Dante found them, *e.g.*, in Ovid (*Metam.* i. 89-150). But again he has an interpretation of his own. As interpreted by *Conv.* iv. 5, *Mon.* i. 16, his golden age was that of Augustus ; the silver, that of the beginning of the decline and fall ; the third, that of the more complete decadence which ended in the division of the Eastern and Western empires. The legs of iron point to the endless wars of the two empires. The “right foot” of clay is the Western empire, which no longer rests on a firm foundation, the last hope of a strong empire having perished with the Hohenstaufen dynasty, but on the crumbling support of a purely selfish policy, leading, as it did, to corruption in both Church and Empire, and to internal dissensions in every city in Italy. That seems to Dante to indicate the coming crash, perhaps the end of the world, which would make an earthly realisation of his ideal impossible. How passionately he clings to that ideal we may see by his words and acts when the arrival of Henry VII. seemed for a short time to bring it within a measurable distance (*Purg.* xxxiii. 42 ; *Par.* xvii. 82, xxvii. 63, xxx. 137, and the Epistles in *Frat. O. M.* iii. 440-475).

<sup>112</sup> One notes the terrible grandeur of the symbol. The sorrows and the tears of men, consequent on the gradual deterioration of the Empire, are the source from which flow, one out of the other, the rivers of Hell, the woes of the condemned. Cocytus, as the river of wailing, receives them all.

And I again : "Where, Master, shall I view 130  
 Or Phlegethon or Lethe ? for of this  
 Thou speakest not, and say'st the other drew  
 Its water from this shower." "Each question is  
 Pleasing to me, but of that crimson tide,"  
 He said, "thou canst not well the meaning miss : 135  
 Lethe shall meet thine eyes, but far outside  
 This pit, e'en there where spirits make them pure  
 When sins repented of no more abide."  
 Then said he, "Now 'tis time we should secure  
 Our exit from the wood ; behind me tread ; 140  
 The banks which are not burnt give footing sure,  
 And here above them every flame falls dead."

## CANTO XV

*The Sin against Nature—Brunetto Latini*

Now on a margin firm we travel o'er,  
 And the stream's vapour so the heat doth slake,  
 It saves from fire the water and the shore.  
 E'en as 'twixt Bruges and Guizzant' Flemings make,  
 Fearing the flood that on their sea-beach rose, 5  
 A bank whereon the ocean's strength may break ;

130-138 The question implies that the pilgrim did not know that he was even now actually on the banks of Phlegethon (*En.* vi. 550), and as he had heard of Lethe, he sought to know where that was. Underlying the question there are, if I mistake not, the thoughts that such sin as that with which he was now in contact is set on fire of Hell ; that there is no oblivion in the lost. The Lethe of forgetfulness of past evil comes only as the close of repentance and purification. Lethe is the last stage of the poet's purification (*Purg.* xxxi. 101). For Acheron, the river of woes, see *C.* iii. 78.

4-9 Two more notes of the extent and direction of Dante's travels. (1) Guizzante has been identified (a) with Ghent, (b) with Cadsand, about 22 kilometres of Bruges (*Phil.*), or (c) with Wissant, 15 kilometres S.W. of Calais (*Scart.*), between Capes Grisnez and Blancnez. Villani (xxi. 68) describes a Guizzante in terms which identify it with the latter. In Dante's time Calais and Wissant were reckoned as belonging to Flanders (Spruner, *Atlas*). The description apparently selects the two termini of the embankment. In connection with Dante's travels the passage indicates a route



Such as the Paduans, where the Brenta flows,  
 Construct, their towns and castles to protect,  
 Ere Chiarentana with the warm spring glows,  
 E'en such in form did he this bank erect, 10  
 Though not like these in width, nor yet in height,  
 Whate'er it be, the Master-Architect.  
 Already was the forest out of sight ;  
 So far from it our footsteps now were set,  
 That even had I turned, 'twere vanished quite, 15  
 When soon a troop of wandering souls we met,  
 Who by the bank's side moved, and every one  
 Looked at us as men look at eve when yet  
 The young moon's crescent in the heaven is shown, 20  
 And so upon us they their eyebrows bent  
 As tailor old at needle's eye doth frown.  
 By such a tribe espied, with glance intent  
 I was by one identified, who took  
 My mantle's hem and cried, "What wonderment!" 25  
 And I, when he his arm towards me shook,  
 From bringing him to recognition clear,  
 I was not hindered by his scorched look,

taken from Cologne (C. xxiii. 62) to Bruges and Wissant, and thence by Dover to London and Oxford (see note on C. xii. 120). Wissant, the harbour of which is now choked up and disused, was in the 12th and 13th centuries the usual port of embarkation for England (Rule, *Life of Anselm*, i. 227, ii. 166, 232, 303). Its neighbourhood abounds in remains of fortifications and embankments raised on natural dunes. It has been identified with the *Portus Itius* of Cæsar (Joanne, *Art. Wissant*), Gui. *Pis. in loco*. (2) The second illustration is taken from the more familiar scene of Padua, and the Brenta which flows through it. That river, liable to inundations from the melting snows of Chiarentana, now known as Carenzana, a mountain ridge in the Trentino, between Valvignota and Valfronzo, on its left bank, had been carefully embanked by the Paduans, to protect their fields (*Scart.*). By others, with less probability, Chiarentana has been identified with Carylthia.

<sup>12</sup> The meaning often given to the words "whoe'er he be" is inconsistent with C. iii. 5. There was no doubt in Dante's mind as to who had made Hell. What he leaves in doubt is the precise degree of likeness to the embankments near Bruges and Padua.

<sup>16</sup> The wandering souls are those who have sinned against nature in the sin of the Cities of the Plain.

<sup>18</sup> The two similitudes are characteristically out of the range of poetic elegance. What was wanted was the picture of the "screwed up" look of intent curiosity, and this they gave as nothing else could do.



But thought my mind a knowledge gained full clear,  
 And bending down my hand toward his face,  
 I asked, "What, Ser Brunetto, art thou here?" 30  
 And he: "My son, ah, think it no disgrace,  
 If I, Brunetto, with thee backward stray,  
 And, for a moment, quit the rabble base."  
 I answered, "This with all my power I pray;  
 And if thou wilt that I should sit with thee, 35  
 I will, if he please, for I go his way."  
 "My son," he said, "who in this company  
 A moment stops, lies there a hundred year,  
 No screen against the smiting fire has he;

<sup>30</sup> Of all the names with which we meet in Dante's Hell, this is probably that which we are most pained to find there. Brunetto Latini had been the poet's teacher, had led him step by step out of the routine of education to a higher wisdom, had taught him how man becomes eternal in the knowledge of God or the eternity of fame, had been kind, benignant, fatherly in look and tone; and yet here he stands for ever branded with the mark of infamy. Could not the poet, we are tempted to ask, have spared us this? What impelled him to so fierce a condemnation, for which no writer, save Dante himself, gives any warrant? To answer that question we must go back in thought to the moment when Dante discovered his master's guilt, when, through common fame or direct knowledge, he first learnt to see that he was as a "whited sepulchre" full of all uncleanness. Looking back to the fiery indignation, the burning shame of that moment, looking to the prevalence of like vices in the class to which his master had belonged, he could not gloss over his guilt or bury it in silence. His name, and none other, was to teach that none but the pure in heart shall see God, and that no gifts of genius, no kindness of nature, will avail to save the impure, who have died impenitent, from condemnation.

The story of Brunetto Latini may be briefly told. Born circ. 1220, he soon took his place among the scholars of the earlier Renaissance, translated from Cicero and Sallust, became a leading person among the Florentine Guelphs, and was made notary, or secretary, of the commune. After the battle of Montaperti he was banished with the other Guelphs (C. x. 48), and retired to Paris. Probably during his stay there he wrote his *Trésor*, a kind of encyclopædia of mediæval knowledge, in French. He returned to Florence circ. 1269, and died in 1294, having had both Dante and Guido Cavalcanti (Verini, *De Vir. Illust.* ii.) as his pupils. During this period he probably wrote his *Tesoretto*, a didactic poem in Italian, noticeable as containing (1) the confession that he and those like him might be described as "*un poco mondanetti*" (Villani (viii. 10) describes him as "*uomo mondano*"; and the use of the feminine "*mondana*" as=*meretrice*, shows the connotation of the adjective), (2) a strong denunciation of the sin for which he is here punished. A work of a singularly foul character, *Il Pataffio*, has been ascribed to him, but critics seem agreed that this is of later date. It may be noted further, (1) that Brunetto had translated some of the ethical and physical treatises of Aristotle; (2) that he was sent on an embassy to Alphonso of Castile in 1260. Translations of Ovid and Boethius into Italian are also ascribed to him (*Weg.* 51, 65; *Ozan.* 54). *Comp. Ort.* pp. 125-170.

<sup>39</sup> The penalty of C. xiv. 40 did not exclude this partial defence.

Wherefore go on ; thy skirts I'll follow near, 40  
 And then will I rejoin my comrades' host,  
 Who wail their endless doom with ceaseless tear."  
 I dared not leave the pathway of that coast  
 To be beside him, but I bowed my head,  
 As one whose mind in reverent thought is lost, 45  
 And he began, "What fate or fortune dread  
 Before the last day brings thee here below ?  
 And who is this by whom thy steps are led ?"  
 "Up there above, where life serene we know,"  
 I said, "I in a valley lost did stray, 50  
 Ere that my age its fulness ripe did show.  
 But yesternorn I bent my steps away,  
 And, as I turned me, he appeared to me,  
 And leads me homeward by this weary way."  
 And he to me : "If thy star guideth thee, 55  
 Thou canst not fail a glorious port to gain,  
 If in yon fairer life I truth did see ;  
 And but that I by death too soon was ta'en,  
 Beholding Heaven towards thee so benign,  
 I for thy work had strengthened thee again : 60  
 But that ungrateful people and malign,  
 Which came in ancient days from Fiesole,  
 And of its rock and millstone still shows sign,

<sup>41</sup> The implied thought is that the sinners were divided into special companies, either according to their nationality or their callings.

<sup>50</sup> The phrase refers to C. i. 25, and has besides the interest of reproducing one of Brunetto's own similitudes in the opening of the *Tesoretto*. The scholar, as of old reports to the master the perplexities in which, in spite of, or because of, his teaching, he had found himself involved. Comp. *Purg.* xxxi. 34.

<sup>53</sup> Once only (C. i. 79) is Virgil named in the *Inferno*. Dante avoids the mention of his name in Hell, just as he avoids that of God, of Christ, of the Virgin Mary.

<sup>55</sup> Brunetto, like other astronomers of his time, believed in stellar influences, and may have cast Dante's horoscope. The poet was born under Gemini, and this implied the gifts of genius and wisdom (C. xxvi. 23; *Par.* xxii. 110). The words seem to have been written under the influence of a hope which remained unfulfilled, unless, indeed, the glorious port was either a deathless fame, or a yet more deathless life.

<sup>61</sup> Fiesole, in Florentine tradition, was the oldest city in the world, and had been destroyed by Julius Cæsar and by Totila, each time rising from

Will for thy good deeds be thine enemy ;  
 And reason good ; for 'mid the sour crab's kind 65  
 It is not meet the sweet fig's fruit to see.  
 On earth an ancient saying calls them blind,  
 A people envious, avaricious, proud ;  
 Take heed that of their ways thou cleanse thy mind.  
 Thy fortune hath on thee this boon bestowed, 70  
 That either faction shall thy help desire,  
 But 'twixt the goat and grass shall be long road.  
 There let the beasts of Fiesole their byre  
 Make for themselves, nor touch the nobler grain,  
 If any grow upon their dunghill's mire, 75  
 In which the holy seed revives again  
 Of those old Romans, who, when it was made  
 The nest of evil, still did there remain."  
 "Had that been fully given me which I prayed ;"  
 I answered him, "thou had'st not here as yet 80  
 An outlaw from our nature's lot been laid,

its ruins. On the rebuilding of Florence by Charlemagne, many of the Fiesolans came within the walls of the city and mingled with the older inhabitants who claimed descent from Rome (*Napier*, i. c. 1, 2, based on *Vill.* i.-iv.; *Malisp.* c. 42-50). In this intermixture Dante, who prided himself on his nobler Roman blood (*Conv.* iv. 5), saw the cause of all the evils which had brought misery on his city and himself.

67 The proverb of the "blind Florentines," still extant (*Scart.*), has been referred either to their trusting the promises of Totila (*Vill.* ii. 1) or their having been cheated by the Pisans, who covered with crimson cloth two columns of porphyry that had been injured by fire and palmed them off as new (*Bocc.*).

71 The prophecies of the *Commedia* reflect, of course, the poet's view of the events that were passing at the time when he wrote them. Here we already note traces of the policy of isolation, the *parte per se stesso* of *Par.* xvii. 69, mingled with the thought, which, like the hope of C. 56, was never more than a thought, that sooner or later either party would be glad to have his support on his own terms. The proverb of l. 72 is like that of "the cup and the lip." The parties of Florence will have to wait some time before they gain their ends. The "beasts of Fiesole" are Dante's special enemies, probably therefore the Neri, and chief among them the house of the Donati.

81-87 As with Farinata, Dante recognises in Brunetto whatever there had been of good. He would have prayed for longer life for him, and therefore for repentance ; would fain have met his master, who "had died and made no sign," in Purgatory, and not in Hell. He could never forget the presence he had once loved, the hours in which he had felt his heart burn within him in longings for an immortality of fame, if not also (for the words are open to either meaning) for the higher eternal life. There may be a

For in my mind and heart there still is set  
 That face of thine, kind, tender, fatherly,  
 When thou didst hourly teach me as we met  
 How man attaineth to eternity, 85  
 And how for that I thank thee, it is right,  
 While yet I live, my speech should witness be.  
 What of my course thou tellest me I write,  
 And keep it, with another text to spell,  
 For Her, who'll, if I reach her, read aright. 90  
 This only would I thee full clearly tell,  
 So long as conscience makes me not afraid,  
 I wait my fortune, work it ill or well.  
 Not strange unto mine ears such pledge is made ;  
 Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel at will, 95  
 And as he wills, the peasant churl his spade."  
 My Master thereupon turned round until  
 O'er his right cheek he glanced, and looked at me,  
 And said, "He listeneth well who noteth still."  
 Not therefore speaking less, in company 100  
 I go with Ser Brunetto, and ask who they  
 His comrades were, best known, of chief degree.  
 And he : "Of some 'tis good to know ; well may  
 On other names a prudent silence fall :  
 For the full tale would take a longer day. 105

special reference to a striking passage in the *Trésor*, vi. 55, in which Brunetto speaks of the man who is "made like to God and to His angels" as leading the "noblest life" and enjoying the only true blessedness.

89 The "other text" is found in the predictions of Ciaccio (C. vi. 65-72) and Farinata (C. x. 79-81). All these partial forecasts the pilgrim has learnt to refer to the fuller insight of Beatrice.

92-96 The *mens conscia recti* which Dante feels that he can claim finds its parallel in *Par.* xvii. 24. There he stands "foursquare" to the blows of fate; here, with the parable of C. vii. 96 in his thoughts, he bids Fortune turn her wheel. *Comp. Æn.* v. 710. The second clause of l. 96 = "let men do what they will;" but the "peasant churl" is probably a thrust at one of the "beasts of Fiesole." *Comp.* l. 72.

100 Halting, as we have seen, was forbidden (l. 38) under heaviest penalties, which Dante would not knowingly bring on his old master.

103 Good to know as a warning to those who were yielding to like vices. Four only are named here, three more in C. xvi.

Know then, in brief, that these were great clerks all,  
 Great men of letters they and of great fame,  
 Sunk, while on earth, in that sin's shameful thrall.  
 Priscian goes there with all his troop of shame,  
 Francesco of Accorso too, and there, 110  
 If thou art fain such scurf to know and name,  
 Thou see'st him whom the Servants' Servant's care  
 From Arno to Bacchiglione moved,  
 Where he has left the members sin did wear.  
 More would I tell, but longer unreprieved 115  
 Nor speech nor walk may be ; for now I see  
 New smoke from out the sand rise, upward moved ;  
 A crowd comes on with whom I must not be ;  
 Only to thee my 'Treasure' I commend,  
 There I still live ; no more I ask of thee." 120

<sup>106</sup> The evil which had passed from the Cities of the Plain to the Phœnician Canaanites, and thence to the Greeks, and so on to the Romans, seems never to have been eradicated from the life of Italy. Frederick II.'s Court at Palermo was said to have been tainted with it. It was fostered, of course, by the compulsory celibacy of the clergy, and by the undisciplined and overcrowded life of the teachers and scholars at all European universities. Roger Bacon (*Comp. Stud.* c. 2) speaks of its prevalence in Paris, noting by the way that Louis IX. had banished many foreign teachers as guilty of it. It was *the* prominent charge brought against the Templars by Philip le Bel. Purvey, in the preface to what is known as *Wyklif's Bible* (ed. Forshall and Madden), mourns over its prevalence at Oxford. It is necessary to state these facts in order to explain the emphasis of Dante's warning note.

<sup>109</sup> No mention of this fact in the life of the great grammarian (*fl.* circ. 525) has been traced by commentators. Possibly Dante may have followed some tradition now lost, or taken him as the representative of a class. So Pietro Dante *in loc.*

<sup>110</sup> Francesco d'Accorso of Florence, the son of one of the great expounders of the Roman law at Bologna (*d.* 1229), was himself a professor in that city, and wrote a commentary on the Code of Justinian. In 1273 he followed Edward I., who passed through Bologna on his return from Palestine, to England, and for six years taught civil law at Oxford. In 1280 he returned to Bologna, and *d.* 1294. Dante may therefore have known him personally. Father and son rest in a sepulchre still extant in Bologna (*Scart.* ; *Kington*, ii. 319). He was noted also for his usury (*Ort.* p. 80).

<sup>112</sup> Here we have a glimpse at still more recent history. The *servus servorum* is Boniface VIII., whom Dante is never weary of branding with the note of infamy (C. xix. 53, xxvii. 70). The criminal, Andrea de Mozzi, Bishop of Florence in 1287, was translated to Vicenza, on the Bacchiglione, in 1295, died in 1296, and was buried at Florence in the Church of S. Gregory. Dante apparently knew the seamy side of his life.

<sup>119</sup> The vanity of authorship is not extinct even in Hell. Brunetto finds comfort in the thought that in Dante's visit there is an opening for an adver-

Then turned he, and like those his way did wend  
 Who at Verona for the mantle green  
 Scour through the plain,—like him who at the end  
 As winner, not as loser, there is seen.

## CANTO XVI

*Guido Guerra—Tegghiaio—Rusticucci—The Waterfall of the  
 Dark River—The Cord thrown away*

ALREADY was I where was heard the din  
 Of water falling to the circle near,  
 Like hum of bees the busy hive within,  
 When shadows three forth starting did appear,  
 With haste advancing from a crowd which passed <sup>5</sup>  
 Beneath the rain of torture sharp and drear :  
 And each one cried, as they drew near us fast,  
 “Halt, thou who seem’st in fashion of thy dress  
 To have thy lot in our corrupt land cast.”

tisement. The poet obviously remembered many instances of a like weakness, the love of man’s praise taking the place of that of the praise of God. For the *Tesoro* see note on l. 32.

<sup>122</sup> Internal evidence that the canto was written during, or after, one of the poet’s visits at Verona. The games were instituted in memory of the victory gained by Azzo d’Este, Podesta of Verona, over the Counts of St. Bonifazio and Montecchi in 1207. They were held on the first Sunday in Lent, and green mantles were given as prizes for races in which men ran naked. The comparison over and above its vividness (the souls in Dante’s Hell wear no garments) may convey the poet’s feeling that such an exhibition was fitter for the sinners whom Dante had described (comp. C. xvi, 21) than for living Christian men. The whole Canto is, it must be owned, terribly Juvenalian in its subject-matter, but Dante might have asked with Juvenal whether there was not a cause for the “*sæva indignatio*” which he utters in it.

<sup>1</sup> The sound of water is that of the stream that falls from the seventh circle to the eighth, as in l. 92-102.

<sup>4</sup> The three shadows are those of Guido Guerra (l. 37), Tegghiaio (l. 41), and Rusticucci (l. 44).

<sup>8</sup> The special distinctive parts of the Florentine dress were the mantle, the hood, and the biretta (as seen in Giotto’s portrait of Dante in the Bargello), in which men saw the survival of an older costume. They, the descendants of the Romans, were still the *gens togata* of Italy (*Vill.* xii. 4).



Ah me ! what scars, old, new, and numberless, 10  
 The burning flames on all their limbs had made !  
 E'en to remember still works sore distress.  
 Unto their cries good heed my Master paid,  
 And turned his face to me and spake : " Now hold !  
 'Tis meet we courteous be to these," he said ; 15  
 " And if it were not for the flames that fold  
 The region all around us, I would say  
 Thy steps, not theirs, should be at full speed told."  
 Thus, as we halted, their old wailing they 20  
 Began again, and when they near us drew,  
 All three of them went whirling on their way,  
 As wrestlers stripped and oiled are wont to do,  
 Watching for vantage where they best may seize,  
 Ere they with blows and thrusts the fight pursue.  
 Then wheeling round, his visage each of these 25  
 So turned toward me, that his neck did take  
 Another course than that his feet did please.  
 " O if the torture of this deep pit wake  
 Scorn in thy soul of us and of our prayer,"  
 Then one began, " and dark, scorched features make 30  
 Thee shrink, our fame may yet prevail to share  
 The knowledge who thou art whose living feet  
 Through paths of Hell so safely seem to fare.  
 He in whose footprints now I follow fleet, 35  
 Though naked now he go and scorched all bare,  
 Had higher birth than would thy credence meet.  
 Grandson he was to good Gualdrada fair ;  
 His name was Guido Guerra, and from birth  
 With mind and sword he wrought his own full share.

<sup>12</sup> We note, as in C. v. 139, the poet's compassion for the sinners while he loathes the sin. That men who might have risen so high, should, through that one fault, have sunk so low, there was " the pity of it."

<sup>15</sup> Courtesy, due to the three as having been, apart from the sin which placed them where they were, men worthy of honour and of high repute. Comp. C. 59, and C. vi. 79-81.

<sup>22</sup> The simile probably connects itself with the games at Verona that had furnished the comparison of C. xv. 122.

<sup>37</sup> Gualdrada, daughter of Bellincione Berti (comp. *Par.* xv. 112, xvi. 99),



The other who beside me treads the earth 40  
 Was Aldobrandi Tegghiaio named ;  
 High in the world should still resound his worth.  
 And I, who with them am thus pained and shamed,  
 Jacopo Rusticucci was ; and know,  
 My haughty wife was chiefly to be blamed.” 45  
 Could I have found some fire-screened way to go,  
 I had myself below among them thrown,  
 And think my Teacher had not said me No ;  
 But lest I too as burnt and baked should run,  
 My terror overmastered my goodwill, 50  
 That made me eager to embrace each one.  
 Then I began : “ Not scorn, but sorrow still,  
 So fixed your sad condition in my mind,  
 That slowly ceaseth it my thoughts to fill,  
 Soon as my Master here had cause assigned, 55  
 In words which quickly made me deem that you  
 Who came were of such worth as now I find.

was one of the heroines of Florentine tradition. When the Emperor Otho IV. (1209-15) came to Florence, admired her beauty, and wished to kiss her, she answered that she would grant that privilege to none but her husband. Otho honoured her for her boldness, and gave her in marriage to Count Guido Guerra (*Vill.* v. 37). Her grandson, the Guido Guerra whom Dante sees, had been captain of the Guelph army of Florence in 1255, and tried to dissuade the Florentines from the expedition against Arezzo which ended in the disaster of Montaperti, after which he was banished with Dante's father and the other Guelphs, returning with them after the victory of Charles of Anjou over Manfred (1267). The Florentine historians speak of him as wise, noble, generous. He had no children, and left his estates to the Commune (*Vill.* vi. 61, 77, vii. 9; *Malisp.* c. 185-187). Dante must be assumed to have known personally what the historians pass over in silence; the same holds good of Tegghiaio, of the family of the Adimari, who had joined Guido Guerra in his counsels of prudence before Montaperti (*Vill.* vi. 77; *Malisp.* c. 170).

45 The words point to a tale of misery and shame which commentators illustrate by stories that are better left untold. What has to be remembered is that the kindred and the friends of those of whom Dante wrote such things were still living in Florence, and that every name thus named by him must have made a hundred enemies. And, as the words that follow show, he had no spite against the men, would fain have done them honour, thrown in his lot with them for a time, acknowledged the goodness and greatness of their lives as citizens, and records extenuating circumstances. What he did he was compelled to do as the prophet of God's judgments, bearing witness that no gifts or noble deeds can save the victim of impure desires. To preach that vaguely would have fallen on deaf ears. What was wanted was to name the men, as prophets of old had named those whom they condemned (*Jer.* xxii. 11, 18, 24, xxviii. 15, xxix. 31).

Your countryman am I ; with reverence due  
 Your deeds and names, that honour well may suit,  
 I evermore of old both heard and knew ; 60  
 I leave the gall and seek the pleasant fruit,  
 Which my true Leader promiseth to me,  
 But first I must plunge down to earth's deep root."  
 "As thou wouldst have thy soul live long to be  
 Thy body's guide," to me was answer given, 65  
 "And thy high fame shine long years after thee,  
 Valour and courtesy, say, have they thriven  
 Within our city as they used of old,  
 Or have they into exile both been driven ?  
 For Guglielmo Borsier, who doth hold, 70  
 New-come, his place of torment with his train,  
 Much grieves our souls with what his words have told."  
 "The upstart race and over-rapid gain  
 Have so given birth to pride and luxury  
 In thee, Firenze, that thou weep'st for pain." 75  
 So I exclaimed with face upturned on high,  
 And then the three, with look as those that hear  
 The truth, so looked on hearing that reply.  
 "If thou dost elsewhere pay no price more dear,"  
 Replied they all, "to grant what others pray, 80  
 Happy art thou, who canst at will speak clear ;  
 If then from this dark world thou take thy way,  
 And turn once more the beauteous stars to spy,  
 When thou 'I have been there !' shalt joy to say,

61 The "gall" may be either that of the misery of C. i. 1-6 or the vices of those from whom he is now parting.

70 Borsier, a native of Genoa, who had settled in Florence, and of whom Boccaccio (*Decam.* G. 1, Nov. 8) tells some humorous stories hardly worth repeating, had died in extreme old age in 1300, but a month or two before the assumed date of the poem. Hence the "new-come." He had brought to the men of the *popolo vecchio* the report of the vices of the *popolo nuovo*, with their quick and ill-gotten gains, their luxury and pride, of whom the Cerchi were the chief representatives.

83 A reminiscence of *Æn.* i. 204—

"*Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*"

The "beauteous stars" and the survival of the love of fame are characteristic touches (C. xv. 119, xxxiv. 139).

Still keep us in our people's memory."

85

The circle then they broke, and legs less slow  
Did seem than wings, so swiftly did they fly.

Not sooner from our lips "Amen" could flow  
Than they in that far distance disappeared ;  
Wherefore my Master deemed it best to go.

90

I followed him, and soon a spot we neared,  
Where sound of falling waters came so hoarse,  
That when we spake our voices scarce were heard.

E'en as that stream which takes its separate course,  
And from Mount Veso eastward first doth flow,  
And down the Apennino's left slope pours,

95

Which men above as Acquacheta know,  
Ere it rush down into its torrent bed,  
And lose that name at Forli far below,

Above San Benedetto murmurs dread

100

From Alps, whence it in single leap doth run,  
Where should be room for full a thousand head ;

Thus headlong, from a bank or broken down,  
We heard those waters dark so loudly roar,  
That soon they had had power our ears to stun.

105

I had a cord which round my waist I wore,  
And with it once of old I thought to take  
The panther with its skin all dappled o'er ;

<sup>86</sup> The "wheel" is that described in l. 21. The three naked forms that had been intertwined limb with limb now pursue their way on their never-ending round.

<sup>95</sup> The reminiscences of travel are fuller and more vivid than usual. Montevoso is one of the Northern Apennines. The Acquacheta is the first stream that flows into the Adriatic, those north of it becoming tributaries to the Po. It falls in a torrent in the gorge between a Benedictine Abbey and that of St. Gaudentius, in one unbroken stream, like, *e.g.*, Scale Force, near Derwentwater. Reaching Forli, it takes the name of Montone, and continues its seaward course. Line 102 has been differently interpreted, there being no noun after the "thousand," (1) as strictly a picture of the scene, the rock-wall affording space for a thousand small cascades, instead of the one big waterfall ; (2) as a sarcastic hit at the degenerate condition of the Benedictine Abbey, where there might have been more than a thousand monks, while actually there were but few. "Where should be room for full thousand thread" would give the former meaning.

<sup>107</sup> Assuming the ethical interpretation of the three beasts of C. i. 32-54, the panther, it will be remembered, represented the sin of sensuality. The

And after I its coil all loose did make,  
 Obeying so the bidding of my Guide, 110  
 Coiled and entwined, I gave it as he spake.  
 Then turned he to the right, and from the side  
 A little distance hurled its full extent,  
 And flung it down the abyss profound and wide.  
 "To this new sign some new and strange event 115  
 Must answer," to myself I made reply,  
 "Since on it thus my Guide looks so intent."  
 Ah me ! how careful men should be when nigh  
 To those who see not outward act alone,  
 But inward thoughts discern with wisdom high ! 120  
 He said to me, "Soon upward cometh on  
 What I await, and what thy fancies dream  
 Soon to thine eyes full clearly will be shown."  
 Aye to that truth which doth as falsehood seem  
 A man should close his lips as best he may, 125  
 Since him, though blameless, men may base esteem.

"cord" must therefore be the symbol of that which seemed to promise a victory over sensuality, *i.e.*, the rule of an ascetic life. As part of the dress of the Franciscan Order, who were thence known as Cordeliers (C. xxvii. 67), it had become the proverbial symbol of that Order. Taken by itself, the passage would imply that at some time or other in his life Dante had become a member of the Tertiary section of the Order, who were not bound by the stricter vows of poverty and celibacy. Add to this (1) that Buti, one of the earliest commentators, speaks of this, here and on *Par.* xxx. 42, as an "undoubted fact;" (2) that Dante speaks with more enthusiasm of St. Francis than of any other saint in *Paradise* (*Par.* xi.); (3) that Giotto's painting at Assisi represents a figure coming to St. Francis in which we recognise the poet's unmistakable features; and (4) that at his death he was buried, by his own desire, in the dress of the Order; and there seems, I think, sufficient reason to follow *Scart.* and other commentators (see especially *Weg.* 446) in adopting that conclusion. If I am right in thinking that it is in a high degree probable that he met Roger Bacon, the great Franciscan friar, at Oxford (*Cont. Rev.* Nov. 1881) before his exile, we may perhaps look to that as the time when he first girt himself with the symbolic cord. It may be noted that in the vision he wears it just as long as he is in contact with sins of sensuality and no longer. Virgil throws it away; higher ethical teaching dispenses with the outward form. The outward form, so often associated with unreality, seems only, as in what follows, to attract the monstrous symbol of hypocrisy. He can dispense with that now, as afterwards he dispenses even with Virgil's guidance (*Purg.* xxvii. 142). Other interpreters see in the cord the symbol of fraud, or integrity, or truth, or vigilance, or self-righteousness. And so the reader must decide. The lines which follow show, at any rate, that the poet had some symbolic meaning in his thoughts.

But here I cannot, and by this my lay,  
 This Comedy, dear Reader, do I swear,  
 (So may it win to lengthened fame its way !),  
 I saw, through that thick air obscure and drear, 130  
 A swimming form that upward seemed to sweep,  
 Which well might fill each careless heart with fear,  
 As one doth turn who diveth in the deep  
 To clear an anchor which or rock's rough crest,  
 Or what the sea hides else, below doth keep, 135  
 Who upward stretches, feet close to him pressed.

*Geryon—The Usurers—The Abyss of Malebolge*

“SEE there the monster with the pointed tail,  
 Which passeth mountains, walls and arms doth break ;  
 See him who fills the whole wide world with bale.”  
 So unto me my Guide began and spake,  
 And signalled to him to approach the shore, 5  
 Near the paved path where we our way did take ;  
 And that foul type of guileful fraud came o'er,  
 And to the bank its head and breast it brought,  
 But not upon that bank its tail it bore.

<sup>127</sup> The new *formula jurandi*, the *Commedia* being to him as a sacred thing, like the relics of a saint, is, one may believe, half earnest and half play. Comp. *Par.* xxv. 1.

<sup>133</sup> The similitude again implies sea-travels. Comp. *C.* vii. 13 ; *Purg.* viii. 1-6.

<sup>1</sup> The name of the monster (Geryon) does not meet us till l. 97. The most noticeable point in the description is the boldness with which Dante throws aside the received image which was associated with the name in Greek and Roman mythology. Geryon was always a three-headed, three-bodied monster (*Æn.* viii. 202 ; *Lucr.* v. 28). Dante makes him a human-headed serpent ; and the reason is not far to seek. The story of *Gen.* iii. had made the serpent the type of false and fraudulent wisdom, *i.e.*, of hypocrisy, and nothing was more common in the art of Mediæval Europe than to represent the serpent who tempted Adam with a human face. Ruskin (*F. C.* xxiv. 14) sees in Geryon the type of the brute and human elements of man's nature

Its face was of a man of righteous thought, 10  
 So kindly did its outward aspect show,  
 And all the trunk in serpent's form was wrought.  
 Two hairy paws did from the armpits grow,  
 And on its back and breast and either side  
 Were many a coil and many a knotted bow : 15  
 Nor woof nor warp that with its colours vied  
 Did Turks or Tartars e'er in clothwork weave,  
 Nor tissues such as these Arachne plied.  
 As boats that oft the river's banks receive,  
 And half is in the water, half on land, 20  
 And as in clime where full-fed Germans live,  
 The beaver for his foray takes his stand ;  
 So in like manner lay that monster low  
 On the stone margin that shuts in the sand.  
 In the void space its tail played to and fro, 25  
 Curling on high the forked and venomed sting,  
 Which, like a scorpion's, armed it 'gainst its foe.  
 Then my guide spake : "'Tis meet we now should bring  
 Our steps a little from the path astray,  
 Where that fierce monster all his length doth fling." 30  
 Then on the right we took our downward way,  
 And ten steps took upon the margin's rim,  
 Beyond the sands and falling flames to stay.  
 And when we had full nigh approached to him,  
 A little farther on the sand I see 35  
 A new tribe sitting near the hollow's brim ;

in harmony, both being false. Line 2 describes the universal influence of hypocrisy, just as C. i. 51, 100, does that of selfish greed.

<sup>17</sup> Possibly a reminiscence of descriptions that Dante had heard, or textile work that he had seen, when he came in contact with Marco Polo at Venice (comp. C. xxi. 7), to which the great traveller returned in 1295 (*d.* 1323). The varied colours, not unlike the pattern of a snake's skin, help out the symbolism of varied and subtle fraud. The story of Arachne comes from Ovid (*Met.* vi. 145), and Virgil (*Georg.* iv. 246).

<sup>21</sup> The poet's ideal imperialism was obviously compatible with a strong dislike to the Teuton as such. For the character given to Germans, comp. Shakesp., *Merch. of Ven.* i. 2. The comparison implies travels along the banks of German rivers, probably the Rhine (comp. C. xxiii. 63).



And then my Master : "That complete may be  
 Thy knowledge of this circle where we tread,  
 Go thou and note well what their destiny.  
 Brief let thy words be that shall there be said ; 40  
 And till thou turn, with him converse will I,  
 That he for us his shoulders broad may spread."  
 So was it on the farthest boundary  
 Of that seventh circle went I all alone,  
 Where sat a people bowed with misery ; 45  
 Out of their eyes their piteous woes were shown,  
 Now here, now there, their hands they made a screen,  
 Now 'gainst the smoke, now 'gainst the hot sand thrown ;  
 Not otherwise in summer dogs are seen 50  
 Moving or head or foot, when they by bite  
 Of fleas, or flies, or gadflies vexed have been.  
 And when on some I gazed with all my might,  
 On whom the dolorous fire was ever flung,  
 I knew not one, but soon there met my sight  
 A bag that on the neck of each was hung, 55  
 Each with a certain badge on certain ground,  
 Which from their eyes keen hungry glances wrung ;  
 And as I went among them looking round,  
 Upon a yellow purse I saw azure,  
 In which a lion's face and form were found. 60  
 Then going farther on my gazing tour,  
 I saw another full as red as blood,  
 Bearing a goose more white than butter pure ;

37 We enter on the circle of the fraudulent, of whom Geryon was the fit custodian.

54 The non-recognition may be either symbolical, as in C. vii. 53, or may be meant to indicate that the poet had had no associates in that class of the fraudulent. The special process by which they are identified probably expresses Dante's scorn for the ostentatious heraldry of the *nouveaux riches* of Florence. Few, if any, of the bearings thus described have found their way into Litta's magnificent volumes on the *Famiglie Celebri Italiane*.

59 The "purse" of the rich citizens takes the place of the shield of knights. The lion *azure* on field *or* identifies the Giaufigliuzzi family of Florence. They were Guelphs, were notorious usurers, and were banished after Montaperti (*Vill.* v. 39, vi. 33-79, viii. 39 ; *Malisp.* c. 172).

63 The poet's judgment falls impartially. The goose *argent* on field *gules*



And one, who bore an azure sow in brood  
 Emblazoned on his little wallet white, 65  
 Said, "Why dost thou on this drear pit intrude?  
 Now get thee gone; and since thou see'st life's light,  
 Know that Vitalian, who dwells near my home,  
 Will on my left hand sit in this sad plight.  
 With these of Florence I from Padua come, 70  
 And many a time they thunder in mine ear,  
 'Lo! for the sovran cavalier make room,  
 Who'll bring the bag where three he-goats appear!'"  
 Then twisted he his mouth, and tongue out-thrust 75  
 Like ox that licks its nose; and I, in fear  
 Lest longer stay should vex him who had just  
 Warned me I should but little while abide,  
 Turned from those souls all weary and adust.  
 I found my Master even then astride  
 Upon the curved back of the monster fiend, 80  
 And then he said, "Be brave; cast fear aside;

was borne by the Ubriacchi (Ghibellines) of Florence (*Malisp.* c. 160; *Vill.* v. 39, vi. 33, 65), of ill repute for the same practice.

<sup>64</sup> The sow *azure* on field *argent* belongs, as the sequel shows, to the Paduan family of the Scrovigni. The speaker is probably a Reginald of that family. Stories were told of him which Dante may have heard: (1) That his last counsel to his son was that in money, and money only, he would find power and strength and safety; (2) that his very last words were: "Give me the key of my chest that no one may find my money" (*Salvatico, Dante e Padova*, 1865, in *Scart.*). His son Henry bought the Arena in Padua (1303), and built on it the chapel in which Giotto painted while Dante looked on, as an expiation for his father's sins (*Ruskin, Giotto and his Works*).

<sup>68</sup> For the first time we have, as it were, a prophetic condemnation of one who was living at the date assumed for the vision, but dead when he wrote this Canto. He is identified with a Vitaliano dei Vitaliani of Padua, whose usury was notorious, and of whom a local chronicle of 1323 speaks as condemned to Hell by the Doctor Vulgaris, *sc.* Dante, as the great scholastic poet who had written in Italian (*Marpurgo, Dante e Padova*, in *Scart.*).

<sup>72</sup> Note the irony of the "sovran cavalier" as an echo of the *poeta sovrano* of C. iv. 88. The bearer of the purse with three goats rampant *sable* on field *or*, Giovanni Buiamonte of Florence, still living in 1300, was as far above all other usurers as Homer was above all other poets. The act described was, in *Isai*. lvii. 4, *Pers.* i. 58-60, expressive of extremest scorn.

<sup>79</sup> The compact with Geryon is represented as made (l. 41) while Dante was occupied with the usurers. The symbolism of the descent in this fashion seems to be that a supreme wisdom like Virgil's can make even fraud, "the wisdom of the serpent," work out a righteous purpose; that wisdom can retain its calmness in using such an instrument; a less trained intellect, like

Now upon steps thus made must we descend ;  
 Mount thou in front, and I will sit between,  
 So that the tail be powerless to offend."  
 As one who waits, with nails all pale and lean, 85  
 The near approach of quartan ague cold,  
 Shivers, if but a passing shade be seen,  
 So was I when to me those words were told.  
 But his strong warnings wrought in me the shame  
 Which for good master makes a servant bold. 90  
 Then on those shoulders wide I riding came,  
 And wished to say, "Take heed thou me embrace,"  
 But my voice could not what I meant proclaim ;  
 But he who oft had helped me of his grace  
 Elsewhere, when I was mounted, clasped me round 95  
 With his strong arms and stood me in good case,  
 And said, "O Geryon, now get o'er the ground ;  
 Wide be thy circuit, gradual thy descent :  
 Think of the burden new that thou hast found."  
 E'en as a little boat from harbour sent 100  
 Goes backward, backward, so he went his way ;  
 And when his huge form for full play found vent,  
 His tail he turned where erst his breast did stay,  
 And, like an eel, that tail outstretched did shake, 105  
 And with his arms the air before him fray.  
 No greater fear, I trow, made men to quake  
 What time that Phaethon let slip the rein,  
 And, as we still see, heaven ablaze did make ;  
 Nor yet when wretched Icarus felt the pain  
 Of the hot wax that left him stripped and bare, 110  
 And his sire cried, "Thou hast an ill path ta'en,"

Dante's, quails and quakes as in an ague, but nerves himself for the enterprise as a "bold servant" for a "good master."

<sup>108</sup> The allusion is to the Milky Way, of which one explanation was that it was caused by the sun's wandering from his course when Phaethon drove the chariot of Apollo. In *Conv.* ii. 15 the various theories of the Galaxy are discussed scientifically. The Dædalus and Icarus story had probably been impressed on Dante's mind by Ovid (*Metam.* viii. 203 *et seq.*).

Than mine was, when around me everywhere  
 I looked, and nothing saw but empty space,  
 All vanished, save that monster in the air.  
 Onward he swims along with slow, slow pace, 115  
 Wheeling, descending, yet I know his flight  
 Only by wind that upward meets my face.  
 Already, from the whirlpool on the right,  
 I hear the dread wild tumult that it made,  
 And therefore stretch my head to see the sight ; 120  
 Then was I of the abyss yet more afraid,  
 For flames I saw, and heard a bitter wail ;  
 So, trembling, round its flanks my limbs I laid,  
 And saw, what I to see till then did fail,  
 Our wheeling and descent through each dread sight 125  
 That now on all sides did the sense assail ;  
 And as the falcon after lengthened flight,  
 Who, seeing neither bird, nor lure, finds blame,  
 And makes his master cry, "What ! dost alight?"  
 Whence quick he started, wheels his weary frame 130  
 A hundred times, and settles far apart  
 From where his master stands, in sullen shame,  
 So Geryon in the depth our course did stay  
 Just at the base whence that sheer rock did spring ;  
 And, from the burden freed that on him lay, 135  
 Went off as speeds an arrow from the string.

<sup>127</sup> The long descent to the pits of the Malebolge recalls the observation of one who, as a falconer, had watched the movements of his bird with keen delight. (See C. xxii. 131; *Purg.* xix. 64, *et al.*) The descent into the earlier circles had been practicable for human feet. Here it is at once deeper and steeper. The fall into the sin of the fraudulent is greater and more headlong than that into other forms of evil, and involves a deeper degradation.

*The First Bolgia—The Seducers, Jason and others—The Second  
Bolgia—The Flatterers*

A PLACE there is in Hell that bears the name  
 Of Malebolge, all of iron-hued stone,  
 As is the circle which surrounds its frame :  
 I' the midst of that malignant region thrown,  
 Yawns wide a well exceeding wide and deep, 5  
 Whose structure shall in season due be shown.  
 Round, then, is that enclosure which doth keep  
 Its place between the pit and that stern shore,  
 And it is cut by ten broad trenches steep.  
 As where, to guard a fortress more and more, 10  
 Wide fosses girdle round a castle's height,  
 They form a figure as the eye looks o'er,  
 Just such an image these formed to our sight ;  
 And as in such a fortress, from the gates  
 To the outer bank, are flung the bridges light, 15  
 So from the base of rock precipitate  
 Crag started, and o'er dikes and moats made track,  
 On to the pit where they converge, truncate.  
 Within this place, down shaken from the back  
 Of Geryon, we found us, and the Bard 20  
 Turned to the left, I following on his track.  
 There, on our right, new woes the prospect marred,  
 New torments there, and novel scourgers too,  
 Which that first Bolgia did within it guard ;

<sup>1</sup> The region Malebolge (= evil pits) includes the forms of crime that come, as in the classification of C. xi. 19-66, under the category of frauds :—(1) Seducers ; (2) flatterers (C. xviii.) ; (3) simonists (C. xix.) ; (4) sooth-sayers (C. xx.) ; (5) bribers and bribe-takers (C. xxi., xxii.) ; (6) hypocrites (C. xxiii.) ; (7) robbers (C. xxiv., xxv.) ; (8) evil counsellors (C. xxvi., xxvii.) ; (9) slanderers (C. xxviii., xxix.) ; (10) forgers and coiners (C. xxix., xxx.). The sin of the traitor is reserved for the ninth and last circle.

<sup>7</sup> As with the city of Dis in C. viii. 1-17, so here, the picture is drawn from the aspect of a mediæval fortress. Here, however, there are ten circular moats (there are instances of three moats, but I do not remember any city with ten) and ten dikes, not of hewn stone, but rough rock and rock-bridges, lead with a slight descent from one to the other.

Below, the sinners naked came in view, 25  
 And this side from the midst our path they crossed ;  
 On that, with us, but swifter course pursue.  
 E'en as the Romans, for the countless host  
 That cross the bridge in year of Jubilee,  
 Of their new way of passing o'er may boast ; 30  
 For on one side all turn their face to see  
 The Castle, as to Peter's shrine they go,  
 And on the other to the Mount move free.  
 This side and that, along the dark rock's brow,  
 Saw I horned demons with great scourge in hand, 35  
 Who with it on their backs laid many a blow.  
 Ah me ! how soon they made that tortured band  
 At the first stroke lift up their legs, and none  
 To wait a second or a third would stand.  
 And as I went my glances fell on one, 40  
 Whom soon as I perceived, I to him said,  
 "Not for the first time now that face I've known."  
 Wherefore to see him clear my feet I stayed,  
 And my sweet Master would with me abide,  
 And to my turning back no hindrance made. 45  
 And he, that scourged one, thought himself to hide,  
 Lowering his face ; but little that availed,  
 For said I, "Thou whose eyes to earth are tied,  
 Unless thy face to tell the truth hath failed,  
 Venedigo Caccianimico thou art, 50  
 But what to such sharp pickle thee hath haled ?"

28 The picture is obviously drawn from a reminiscence of what Dante had seen during his visit or pilgrimage to Rome in 1300 (his formal mission was in 1301), which Boniface VIII. had proclaimed as a year of jubilee (*Vill.* viii. 36; *Weg.* 140). What had struck him was the ordered march of a great multitude (more than 2,000,000 were in Rome during the greater part of the year), each keeping to the rule of the road, as they crossed the Tiber towards the Castle of St. Angelo. "The Mount" has been identified with the Monte Gianicolo, or the Monte Giordano. As the Church of St. Pietro in Montorio stands on a spur of the former, and would naturally be one of the shrines visited by the pilgrims, it fits in better with the picture than the slight elevation, unknown to fame, of Monte Giordano (see Barlow *in loc.*). For another reference to the Jubilee, compare *Par.* xxxi. 104.

50 The tale of baseness is briefly told. The Caccianimici (the name is

And he : "Against my will I that impart,  
 But thy clear accents do my speech constrain,  
 And waken old-world memories in my heart.  
 'Twas I that fair Ghisola's heart did gain 55  
 The proud Marchese's will in all to bear,  
 However men that story foul explain.  
 Nor of Bologna I alone weep here ;  
 Nay, with them rather so is filled the place,  
 That not as many are the lips taught there, 60  
 'Twixt Reno and Savena, *Sipa's* phrase.  
 And if of this thou askest evidence,  
 Our greedy spirit in thy mind retrace."  
 And, as he spake, a demon drove him thence  
 With knotted scourge, and said, " Away, away, 65  
 Pander ; no women here are sold for pence."  
 I then drew back to where my Guide did stay,  
 And then a few steps farther we passed by,  
 Where from the bank a bold rock forced its way.  
 With nimble feet upon it we leapt high, 70  
 And on its ridge then turning to the right,  
 Ceased on those timeless rounds our path to try.  
 When we came there, where, underneath the height,  
 Opens a path, where those poor scourged ones go,  
 My Master said, " Take good heed to the sight 75

sufficiently characteristic of the time) were a noble family of Bologna. Venedico was Podesta of Milan in 1286. His sister Ghisola was famed for her beauty. He, to gain the favour of his patron, Azzo or Opizzo d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, gave him, "for value received" (p. 66), facilities for her seduction (*Scart.*). Line 57 implies a personal knowledge, on Dante's part, of a story of which there were many floating versions. The term "pickle," which in any language, as in English, might be a natural equivalent for "trouble," had a local significance in Bologna, where a waste pit outside the city near S. Maria in Monte was known as the *Salsa*. Rubbish and filth of all kinds were thrown in, and the bodies of infamous criminals were left there to rot. It was, as it were, the Gehenna of Bologna, and the extremest reproach of Bolognese Billingsgate was, "Your father was thrown to the *Salse*" (*Beniv. Ramb.* in *Scart.*).

<sup>60</sup> *Sipa*, for *sia* or *si*, seems to have been a Bolognese shibboleth. The Reno and the Savena are two rivers flowing from the Apennines into a branch of the Po, and forming the natural boundaries of the Bolognese territory (Joan. de Virg. *Ecl.* ii. 1).

<sup>63</sup> Dante had been at Bologna as a student, and had known the vices of its citizens.



Of those, the others born for sin and woe,  
 Of whom thou hast not seen as yet the face,  
 Because with us they walked in even row."  
 From the old bridge we saw towards us pace,  
 As from the other side, another band, 80  
 Whom in like mode the cruel scourge did chase.  
 My Master kind, not waiting for demand,  
 Said to me, "See yon lofty form draw near,  
 Who sheds no tear, though sorely pained he stand!  
 What kingly greatness still doth linger there! 85  
 That same is Jason, who by craft and skill  
 From Colchian shores the wondrous ram did bear.  
 By Lemnos' isle he passed in moment ill,  
 When the bold women, by fierce daring pressed,  
 Swore all their males in ruthless rage to kill. 90  
 With tokens there and words full subtly dressed  
 Hypsipyle he cheated, maiden fair,  
 Who had already cheated all the rest.  
 Forlorn and great with child, he left her there.  
 Such crime now dooms him to such punishment: 95  
 Medea too finds ample vengeance here  
 With him are those who use like blandishment.  
 Let it suffice thee thus much of this glen  
 To know, and those who in its jaws are pent."  
 Already stood we where the strait path then 100  
 Crosses the second causeway, passing o'er,  
 And forms a buttress arching o'er the den.  
 There heard we moans and cries of travail sore  
 In the next pit, from those who snort in pain,  
 And with their hands themselves smite evermore. 105

<sup>86</sup> Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, with his double seduction (1) of Hypsipyle, queen of Lemnos, who had "cheated" her countrywomen by rescuing her father, Thoas, from the massacre of all Lemnian males, on which they had resolved, and (2) of Medea of Colchis, whom he abandoned for Creusa, appears as the great seducer of antiquity.

<sup>104-123</sup> We pass from the seducers to the flatterers, wallowing, as it were, in their own filth. Of the Interminei (abbreviation of "Interminelli") here named, little is known but that he was of the party of the Bianchi at Lucca (*Vill.* viii. 46). History records nothing more about him; but the early



Its sloping banks a crusted scurf did stain,  
 Formed by the vapours clinging from below,  
 Which both o'er eyes and nose doth mastery gain.  
 So deep the bottom is, that nought doth show,  
 Unless one mounteth to the arch's span, 110  
 Where the rock forward most its mass doth throw.  
 Thither we came, and thence, where deep fosse ran,  
 I saw a tribe in such filth suffocate,  
 As festers in draught-houses made by man.  
 And whilst I sought with glance to penetrate, 115  
 One I beheld with head so foul with mire,  
 I could not tell if lay or priest his state.  
 He cried to me, "Why dost thou so desire  
 Rather on me than my foul mates to gaze?"  
 And I to him: "Because, with tresses drier, 120  
 If memory serve, I knew thee in old days:  
 Alëssio Interminei I note,  
 Of Lucca; hence on thee my vision stays  
 More than the rest." Then, as his pate he smote,  
 "Thy flattering words," he said, "have sunk me low, 125  
 Wherewith was never surfeited my throat."  
 And then my Guide: "Take heed that thou bend  
 now  
 Thy head a little forward, that thine eyes  
 May reach to look upon that face, and know  
 That foul dishevelled strumpet who there lies, 130  
 And tears her flesh with nails in foul filth dyed,  
 And now stands up, now sitteth squatting-wise.

commentators, building probably upon Dante's text, describe him, some as a flatterer, specially of women, some as the keeper of a brothel (*Buti.*, *Benv.*, *Jac.*, *Dant.* in *Scart.*).

130 A yet fouler picture comes from the Thais of the *Eunuchus* of Terence. The precise form of the flattering speech which turned Dante's stomach was that when she received from her lover's messenger the gift which he had sent her, she had sent back word that she valued it above all others because it came from him. We can hardly doubt, I imagine, that the poet had in his mind a Thais of later date, belonging to Florence or Bologna. The picture seems drawn from the *Vulg.* of *Ecclesi.* ix. 10.

Thais is she, the harlot, who replied,  
 Her lover asking, 'Dost thou thank me then  
 Truly?' 'Ah! yes, and wondrously beside.' 135  
 Enough for this our gaze be what we've seen."

## CANTO XIX

*The Third Bolgia—The Simonists—Pope Nicolas III.—Church  
 Corruptions*

O SIMON MAGUS! O ye wretched crew!  
 Who things of God, that should be brides of good,  
 To your own greed adulterate anew,  
 By lust of silver and of gold subdued;  
 Now is it meet the trump for you to sound, 5  
 Who in that Bolgia third in order stood.  
 Already on the next sepulchral mound  
 We had ascended to the mid-crag's height,  
 Whence a plumb-line goes down the abyss profound.  
 O Sovran Wisdom! what strange skill and might 10  
 Thou show'st in Heaven and earth and that world drear,  
 And with what justice orderest all things right!  
 I saw within the sides and bottom there  
 The livid rock all pierced with many a hole,  
 All of one size, and each did round appear. 15  
 Nor less nor greater seemed they, on the whole,  
 Than those which, in my beautiful St. John,  
 Are formed, where priests baptize each infant soul;

<sup>1</sup> In entering the circle of the Simonists (this sin taking its name from the history of Acts viii. 20) the pilgrim found himself face to face with what was by the confession of Papal as well as Protestant historians, the canker of the Mediæval Church. Men looked to spiritual functions as things which could be bought for money, which might be used to make it. The modern form of traffic in livings is bad enough, but it is guarded, by the very publicity of its conditions, from some of the worst evils which attended its older working. From Dante's standpoint the temporal accidents of those spiritual functions were consecrated, as the nuns that were the brides of Christ were consecrated, not to be polluted by the touch of unclean hands.

<sup>17</sup> The reminiscence of the exile is singularly touching. The octagonal

Whereof, not many years back, I broke one,  
 To save a child that lay a-drowning there : 20  
 Let this be proof that men may falsehood shun.  
 Out of the mouth of each I saw appear  
 A sinner's feet, and upward to the thigh  
 The legs ; all else was in that prison drear.  
 With all of them the feet in agony 25  
 And joints were writhing in the fierce fire's throe ;  
 They would have burst all bands and withes that  
 tie.  
 E'en as of things well oiled the fiery glow  
 Is wont to spread o'er all the surface wide,  
 So was it with these men from heel to toe. 30  
 "Who is that, Master, by such torment tried,  
 Who writhes himself above all others there,  
 O'er whom," said I, "a redder flame doth glide ?"  
 And he to me : "If thou wilt let me bear  
 Thee down along the bank that lies most low, 35  
 Thou from himself of his own sin shalt hear."  
 And I : "My will with thy good-will doth go ;  
 Thou art my Lord, and know'st I never slight  
 Thy will, and what I speak not thou dost know."

Baptistry of S. John at Florence comes before his mind. In it there stood four fountains, about three or four feet deep. A Florentine tradition reports that a boy of Florence, Antonio de Cavicciuoli, in the crowd that was gathered on the Saturday before Easter (*i.e.*, on the self-same day which we have now reached in the poem) for lighting their tapers at the sacred fire, fell into one of these fountains, and was extricated by Dante, who did not hesitate to break it (*Comm. Anon.* in *Scart.*). Apparently his enemies had twisted this into something like a charge of sacrilege. The date is not fixed, but the "not many years" point to a time before he left Florence, and possibly during his tenure of office as one of the Priori. The old fountains were removed in 1576 (*Lubin*).

<sup>22</sup> The form of punishment is, like all others, symbolic. They—it is noticeable that the only simonists named are Popes—had inverted the true order of the spiritual society, and now they themselves are in their pits head downwards. Their brows might have gained the aureole of saints, and now their feet glow, varying in their fiery red according to their baseness, as those aureoles vary with the degrees of sanctity, with the flames of Hell. It falls in with this symbolism that to be buried alive with the head downward was the mediæval punishment of assassins. Dante may have heard the cries of a victim so punished asking for a confessor, for the sake even of a few moments' delay.

Then came we to the fourth embankment's height ; 40  
 We turned, and on the left hand wound our way  
 Down to the narrow pit, with holes bedight ;  
 Nor did my Master put my weight away  
 From off his hip till by the hole we stood  
 Of him whose legs went writhing so alway. 45  
 "Whoe'er thou be whose head is downward bowed,  
 O doleful soul, like stake in earth deep driven,  
 Speak if thou can'st ;" so spake I out aloud.  
 As stands the friar-confessor, who hath shriven  
 The base assassin, who, when fixed aright, 50  
 Recalls him, that some respite brief be given,  
 I stood : he cried : "And stand'st thou there upright,  
 Stand'st thou already here, O Boniface ?  
 By many years my scroll hath erred from right ;  
 Has that ill gain so soon lost all its grace, 55  
 For which thou didst not fear by fraud to seize  
 The beauteous bride and work her foul disgrace ?"  
 So stood I then, as men stand ill at ease,  
 Failing to see what meant the answers made,  
 As mocked, not knowing how to answer these. 60  
 Then, "Tell him quickly, quickly," Virgil said,  
 " 'I am not he, not he whom thou dost guess.' "  
 And I, as he commanded me, obeyed.  
 Then writhed his feet that soul, in sore distress,  
 And sighing, with sad voice of deepest woe 65  
 Said to me, "What then bidd'st thou me confess ?

<sup>45</sup> The first of the Papal simonists is Pope Nicolas III. (1277-80), whom Villani (vii. 54) describes as avaricious and worldly, bent on amassing wealth for himself and his kindred, and openly practising simony. Villani, it will be remembered, was a Guelph historian (see Milm. *L. C.* xi. 4 ; *Malisp.* c. 218).

<sup>52</sup> Dante, looking to the assumed date of his vision (1300), could not place Boniface, who was then living, in Hell. He finds an ingenious way of evading the difficulty in the foresight which, as in *C.* vi. 65, x. 94-108, he assigns to the spirits of the lost. Nicolas knows that Boniface is to join him and his companions, but had not expected him for some years to come (Boniface *d.* 1303), and is therefore startled by what he takes to be his arrival.

<sup>56</sup> The "fraud" refers to the influences by which Boniface had brought about Celestine V.'s abdication. The "beauteous bride," as in l. 3, is the Church of Christ.

If thou'rt so eager who I am to know,  
That thou hast therefore by the bank come down,  
Know that round me the sacred robe did flow ;  
I as the she-bear's son was truly known,  
So eager to increase the bear-cubs' store ;  
There money, here myself, in purse I've thrown.  
Beneath my head are dragged a many more,  
My predecessors, stained with Simon's sin,  
Now crushed where fissures through the hard rock  
bore.  
I too shall downward fall when he shall win  
His way here, who I thought had come in thee,  
When I my sudden questions did begin.  
But longer time my feet thus blistered be,  
Longer have I been here, feet over head,  
Than he shall stand with feet red-hot to see.  
For after him comes one of fouler deed  
From Western clime, a pastor without law,  
Who him and me alike shall supersede.

<sup>70</sup> The words play upon the family name of the Pope, Orsini, the "bear-whelps," the "bear" figuring conspicuously on their coat of arms (Litta. s. v.). The grim sarcasm of the poet paints him as being in death what he had been in life. He was always putting money into his purse; now he has put himself.

<sup>73</sup> This, then, was Dante's summing up of the history of the Papacy for many centuries. There was scarcely even an exception to prove the rule.

<sup>80</sup> The prediction of course implies that the Canto, or this passage in it, was written after the death of Clement V. in 1314. For the death of Boniface see *Purg.* xx. 90. There were twenty-three years between the deaths of Nicolas and Boniface; there should be little more than ten between those of Boniface and Clement V. (*d.* April 1314). Benedict IX., whose short pontificate (*d.* 1304) came between the two, is designedly passed over as exempt from the vices of those who went before and followed him (*Vill.* viii. 80).

<sup>82</sup> Bertrand del Gotto, Archbishop of Bordeaux, chosen as Pope Clement V., was a Gascon by birth. Every act of his must have seemed to Dante iniquitous and disastrous. He transferred the Papacy from Rome to Avignon, and so began the seventy years of Babylonian exile, made himself the servile instrument of Philip the Fair in the suppression of the Knights Templars, and was besides conspicuous for simony, nepotism, and personal profligacy (*Vill.* viii. 80, ix. 59; *Milm. L. C.* vii. 171-324). Of him we hear again in *Par.* xvii. 82 as having tricked Henry VII. with fair promises which were not kept, and his doom is again proclaimed in *Par.* xxx. 143-148. For a brief moment Dante too had been deceived like the Emperor (*Ep.* 5), and the fact that he had been tricked gave a fresh bitterness to his indignation.

Another Jason he, such as we saw 85  
 In Maccabees ; and as on him his king  
 Then smiled, so shall the Prince who France doth awe  
 Treat this one." I scarce knew if 'twere a thing  
 Too bold, but I to him in verse replied :  
 "Tell me, I pray thee, what great sum to bring 90  
 Our Lord bade Peter ere He would confide  
 The sacred keys into his custody ?  
 Truly no more than 'Follow me' He cried ;  
 Nor those with Peter bade Matthias buy  
 With gold or silver, when by lot he gained 95  
 The place the false soul lost by treachery.  
 Therefore stay here ; thou righteously art pained ;  
 And keep thou well thy money basely earned,  
 Which thee to boldness against Charles constrained.  
 And were it not I have not quite unlearned 100  
 My awe and reverence for those keys supreme,  
 Which by thy hands in yon glad life were turned,

<sup>85</sup> Jason (Greek substitute for Joshua) is the apostate priest of 2 *Macc.* i. 8, iv. 13-19, who made himself the tool of Antiochus Epiphanes by stealthily corrupting all that kept Israel as a separate people. The king of France is Philip IV. the Fair (1268-1314).

<sup>90</sup> In the burning words that follow we hear the prophet rather than the poet. To us the words have lost something of their power through long familiarity, through the mitigation of the evil. We have to think of them, and of the courage which their utterance implied, as they came in all their incisive force from Dante's pen. (For l. 95, see *Acts* i. 26.) The poet, in the spirit of a true reformer, falls back from the corruptions of later ages upon the pattern of the Apostolic Church.

<sup>99</sup> The words refer to the secret transactions that preceded the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. Nicolas III. was irritated with Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, for having refused a proposal of marriage between his nephew and the Pope's niece. John of Procida, after visiting the Emperor John Palæologus at Constantinople, came in the disguise of a Franciscan friar to Rome and persuaded the Pope with large bribes to enter into negotiations with Peter III. of Arragon, the outcome of which was the revolt in Sicily and the consequent overthrow of French dominion in that island (*Vill.* vii. 54-57; *Malisp.* c. 218-220 in *Scart.*; and Amari, *War of the Sicilian Vespers*, *passim*).

<sup>100</sup> The whole passage that follows was suppressed by the Spanish Inquisition (Sotomayor, *Index Libror. Prohib.*, p. 324, Madrid, 1667).

<sup>102</sup> The author of the *De Monarchiâ* has not quite laid aside his reverence for the Papal ideal, bitter as he may be against those who have corrupted it. The Empire and the Church, each with defined rights under its own ruler, were in his theory essential conditions of a true polity, and therefore of human happiness.



I would use words that harsher far would seem,  
 Because your avarice fills the world with woe,  
 Crushing the good, and those of vile esteem 105  
 Upraising. You the Evangelist did show,  
 Ye shepherds, when the harlot he displayed  
 Who, by the streams, doth kings as lovers know ;  
 She who with seven heads born was there portrayed,  
 Who from the ten horns did her strength renew, 110  
 As long as she the Bridegroom's law obeyed.  
 Silver and gold are now made gods by you,  
 And what divides you from the Paynim wild ?  
 Ye worship hundreds, he to one is true.  
 Ah ! Constantine, what evil came as child, 115  
 Not of thy change of creed, but of the dower  
 Of which the first rich Father thee beguiled ! ”  
 And while my song such notes as these did pour,  
 As anger or remorse his soul did sting,  
 Both feet he writhed as though in torment sore. 120  
 I think my Guide was pleased as I did sing,  
 With such contented lip he still did list  
 The sound of words that had a truthful ring.

110 The words have the interest of being a mediæval interpretation of *Rev.* xvii. 1-15, in which, however, the harlot and the beast seem somewhat strangely blended. The harlot is the corrupted Church of Rome ; the seven heads are the seven hills on which the city is built, or perhaps, with an entirely different exegesis, the seven gifts of the Spirit, or the seven sacraments with which that Church had in its outset been endowed ; the ten horns are the ten commandments. As long as the Church was faithful to her Spouse, she had the moral strength which came from those gifts and the Divine Law which she represented (*Pet. Dant.* in *Scart.*). When that failed, she became as a harlot, and her whoredom with kings was the symbol of her alliance with secular powers for the oppression of the nations. *Comp. C.* i. 100.

112 An echo of *Hos.* viii. 4.

115 The words imply the mediæval legend of the donation of Constantine, on which Dante dwells in *Mon.* ii. 12, iii. 10. The Emperor, it was said, had been cleansed from leprosy by Pope Sylvester II., and as a thank-offering transferred Rome and its adjacent territory to the Papal See (*comp. C.* xxvii. 94). The so-called donation was published with the false decretals by the pseudo-Isidore. Its spuriousness was first exposed by Lorenzo Valla (see Döllinger, *Die Papst-fabeln des Mittelalters*, p. 52). The passage is memorable as having been quoted by Milton in his *Reformation in England*.

117 From Dante's standpoint Constantine might give territory, but could not alienate one jot or tittle of imperial prerogative (*Mon.* iii. 10).



Then both his arms around me he did twist,  
 And when he had me fast upon his breast, 125  
 Retraced our downward path, nor footstep missed ;  
 Nor was he with that weight of mine oppressed,  
 But to the summit of the arch did bear,  
 Where the fourth dike upon the fifth doth rest.  
 Gently he laid his burden from him there, 130  
 Gently upon the rugged rock and steep,  
 Which wild goats would have found it hard to clear :  
 Then was disclosed another valley deep.

## CANTO XX

*The Fourth Bolgia—The Soothsayers—Amphiarans and Others*

Now of new torments must my verses tell,  
 Which to the twentieth canto subject lent  
 Of this first poem of those plunged in Hell ;  
 Already was I gazing, all intent,  
 To look all down the pit that open lay, 5  
 All bathed in tears of anguish and lament.  
 Through the round vale I saw a people stray,  
 Silent and weeping, and with solemn pace,  
 Like litany processions, wend their way.  
 And as my glance went farther down in space, 10  
 Each seemed to me distorted wondrously  
 From the chest upwards even to the face ;

<sup>124</sup> The ever-recurring tenderness of Virgil in supporting the pilgrim over rough places may be only a touch of the poet's personal affection for him, but probably it is also a symbol of the light and strength which he had found in Virgil's teaching when the corruptions of the Church weighed heavily on his mind. His "feet had well nigh slipped," when some lines from the *Æneid* came to his mind and kept him steadfast.

<sup>1</sup> The new torments are those of the fourth Bolgia, the prison of the soothsayers. The "litany processions" may, like C. xviii. 28, be a reminiscence of the jubilee at Rome, but the sight was, of course, a common one throughout Italy. The application of the term Canzon, commonly used by Dante of shorter poems, to each part of the *Comm.* is worth noting.

<sup>11</sup> The symbolism is obvious. Those who had sought by unlawful means

For to the reins each looked with back-turned eye,  
 And could not help but he must backward go,  
 For none what lay before him could espy. 15  
 It may be that by palsy's withering blow  
 Some have been turned in fashion as I saw ;  
 But I ne'er knew, nor deem it can be so.  
 If God shall grant thee, Reader dear, to draw  
 Due fruit from what thou readest, think how I 20  
 Could dry-eyed look upon that doom of awe,  
 When this our human shape I saw come nigh,  
 So twisted that the tears their eyes did weep  
 Fell down the spine, nor left the haunches dry.  
 Certes I wept, and leant against the steep 25  
 Of the hard rock, so that to me my Guide  
 Said, "Art thou still as those whose wit doth sleep ?  
 Here piety lives when pity's self hath died.  
 Who is more sunk in wickedness than he  
 Whom, from God's judgment, passion turns aside ? 30  
 Lift up thy head, lift up ; yon sufferer see,  
 For whom earth in the 'Thebans' sight oped wide ;  
 Wherefore all cried, 'Ah ! whither dost thou flee,  
 Amphiaraios ? Why from war dost hide ?'  
 He, till he reached the bottom, never stayed, 35  
 Where Minos sits, by whom each soul is tried.

to look too far ahead, and had been full of "great swelling words of vanity," are condemned to look behind them, not seeing their own way, and to walk in perpetual silence.

<sup>21</sup> The words find a distinct echo in Milton, *P. L.* xi. 494.

<sup>22</sup> The double meaning of the Italian *pietà* (reproduced in *Par.* iv. 105) is scarcely reproducible in English. The thought is the keynote to all that most startles us in the *Inferno*. The mind that cannot accept the Divine punishment of evil is not rightly trained in the discipline of the Divine holiness, and the thought that the punishment was for the great mass of mankind simply retributive was, it need scarcely be said, the dominant thought of mediæval, as it has since been of Protestant, theology.

<sup>24</sup> Amphiaraios, like Capaneus (*C.* xiv. 63), was one of the "Seven against Thebes," and Dante's knowledge of them comes from the same source, chiefly from Statius. Knowing by his divinations that the siege would be fatal to him, he hid himself; but his retreat was betrayed to Polynices by his wife Eriphyle, and he was forced to join in the attack. A thunderbolt struck him; the earth opened and he was swallowed up (*Stat.*

See for a breast he has his shoulders made ;  
 For since he sought to see too far before,  
 He looks behind, and walks with backward tread.  
 See, too, Tiresias, who changed semblance bore, 40  
 When he, from male, a female form did gain,  
 And every limb in altered fashion wore ;  
 And he had need to strike the serpents twain  
 With that his rod, when they were all entwined,  
 Ere he man's special plumes could wear again. 45  
 To his paunch Aruns turns his parts behind,  
 Who in the hills of Luni, where they plough  
 Who 'neath Carrara's rocks their dwelling find,  
 Had a wide cave within the white rock's brow,  
 And in it dwelt, nor failed him then the sight 50  
 Of stars of heaven and great sea's waves below.  
 And she who hides her bosom from the light  
 With tresses loose, so that thou see'st no more,  
 Who on that side with hair is covered quite, 55  
 Manto she is, who many a land roamed o'er,  
 And came at last to rest where I was born :  
 Wherefore I wish that thou shouldst hear my lore.  
 After her father's life was spent and worn,  
 And Bacchus' city tasted slavery,  
 Long time she wandered through the world forlorn. 60

*Theb.* vii. 690-823). The cry of the Thebans connects that catastrophe tauntingly with his former concealment.

<sup>40</sup> The story of the change of sex in Tiresias is found in Ovid. *Metam.* iii. 320-345. He passed from man to woman on striking with his rod two serpents that were entwined together. Seven years afterwards he regained his manhood by a like process.

<sup>46</sup> Aruns appears in Lucan (i. 586) as an Etruscan seer who foretold the war between Cæsar and Pompeius and the triumph of the former. Luni is the city in the Carrara region which gives its name to the district of the Lunigiana, the territory of the Malaspini, one of whom, Moroello, was Dante's friend and host.

<sup>55</sup> In the story of Manto we have a long and detailed legend of which no trace has been found in any classical or mediæval writer. The poet was obviously attracted to the legend by its connection with Mantua as the birthplace of Virgil. Virgil himself (*Æn.* x. 198-201) makes Ocnus, the son of Manto, who was the daughter of Tiresias, the founder of the city. In *Purg.* xxii. 113, curiously enough, Dante places the daughter of Tiresias

A lake there is in our fair Italy  
 At the Alp's foot that shuts Lamagna in,  
 Benaco, where the Tyrol low doth lie.  
 By thousand streams and more the Apennine,  
 I trow, is bathed, which in the lake are pent 65  
 Camonica and Garda's bounds within ;  
 A place there is midway where he of Trent  
 Chief Shepherd, and Verona's, Brescia's too,  
 Might each give blessing if that way he went ;  
 There Peschiera's fortress, bulwark true 70  
 To face the strength of them of Bergamo  
 And Brescia, where a lower shore we view ;  
 There needs must be that all the waters go,  
 Which fair Benaco's bosom fails to hold,  
 And through green pastures like a river flow. 75  
 Soon as the current leaves its channel old,  
 No more Benaco, Mincio is it styled,  
 Till at Governo with the Po 'tis rolled ;

(Stat. *Theb.* iv. 463) in the *limbus* of C. iv. The city of Bacchus is Thebes, which after the defeat of the Seven came under the power of Creon.

<sup>61</sup> The description speaks of an intimate acquaintance with the whole of the Benaco (= Lago di Garda) district. Lamagna = Germany. Garda, which now gives its name to the lake, is on its right hand in the Veronese territory. The Apennino (with *v.* *l.* Pennino) has but the coincidence of name with the Apennine chain that forms the backbone of Italy. The Val Camonica is one of the greatest valleys of Lombardy, more than fifty miles in length, and runs from the ridge of Tonale to Bormio, ending in the lake Iseo. The limits of the Apennine given include great part of the hill country east of the lake.

<sup>67</sup> The spot is further defined from an intimate local knowledge as being the meeting point of the dioceses of the Bishops of Trent, Brescia, and Verona ; probably the island Isola de' Frati, near the point of Manerba, or at the mouth of the Tignagar.

<sup>70</sup> Peschiera, then, as in later times, one of the great fortresses of the Lombard quadrilateral. At the time when Dante wrote, it was in the hands of his patron, Can Grande of Verona, and hence the significance of his speaking of it as defying Brescia and Bergamo, who were allied against him. Peschiera stands near the lower end of the lake. Below this, the name Benaco is lost, and the Mincio flows out of the lake, and forms three artificial lakes, separated from each other by embankments and connected by bridges, that encompass the present city of Mantua. After this it again flows on as the Lower Mincio, and flows into the Po at Governolo. It is obvious that such a scene may have presented the idea of the arrangement of Malebolge (xviii. 1-18). Of the historical associations connected with the meeting of Attila and Pope Leo I. at Mantua, Dante says nothing.

Nor far it runs before a low waste wild  
 It finds, and spreads into a marshy lake, 80  
 And taints the summer with its mists defiled.  
 There saw the ruthless maid, as she did take  
 Her way, a field where never passed the share,  
 In the mid-marsh, where none their home did make;  
 There, that her life apart from men might fare, 85  
 She with her servants lived to work her art,  
 And left untenanted her carcase there.  
 Then men who, scattered round, had dwelt apart,  
 Were gathered to that place, defended well  
 By the wide swamp that girt its every part, 90  
 O'er her dead bones they reared their citadel,  
 And, for her sake who first did choose the place,  
 As fittest name, their choice on Mantua fell.  
 Of old they were a far more crowded race,  
 Ere Casalodi's blindness had received 95  
 From Pinamonte's fraud such sore disgrace ;  
 Therefore I warn thee, lest thou be deceived,  
 If otherwise my city's birth be told  
 For truth let no such falsehood be believed."  
 And I: "O Master, of such worth I hold 100  
 Those words of thine, and so my faith they gain,  
 All else to me were but as embers cold.  
 But of the tribe that passes, tell me plain  
 If thou see'st any worthy special note ;  
 Only for that would I attention strain." 105  
 Said he to me, "See him who from his throat  
 Lets fall his beard upon his shoulders swarth ;  
 When Greece of old sent all her males afloat,

<sup>85</sup> The story as told by chroniclers (*Murat. xx. 722*, in *Scart.*) is that the Casalodi were Guelph counts and lords of Mantua ; that Pinamonte de' Buonacorsi, a Mantuan, alarmed the Count Albert with rumours of conspiracies, persuaded him to take oppressive measures of precaution, and then went among the Mantuans and stirred them to a revolt, which ended in the expulsion of the Count.

<sup>99</sup> The special attestation is perhaps emphasised on account of the discrepancy already noticed between the stories of the *Æneid* and the *Inferno* as to Mantua.

And empty cradles mourned their children's dearth,  
 He was an augur, and with Calchas told, 110  
 In Aulis, when the first rope should leave earth—  
 Eurypylus his name ; and so of old  
 My lofty drama sings in certain place ;  
 Thou know'st it well, whose mind the whole doth hold.  
 That other there, whose ribs fill scanty space, 115  
 Was Michael Scott, who truly full well knew  
 Of magical deceits the illusive grace.  
 Guido Bonatti, yea, Asdente too  
 Thou see'st, who now would fain the thong and thread  
 Have plied—too late he doth his folly rue. 120  
 Those wretched ones thou see'st, who needle fled,  
 And spool and spindle, witches to become,  
 With herbs and idols their profane art sped.

<sup>112</sup> Eurypylus appears in conjunction with Calchas in the tale of Sinon, in *Æn.* ii. 113, as a Greek soothsayer.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Scott (*d.* 1290). Over and above the local legends which the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* has made familiar to most English readers, the name of the great Scotch wizard had not a few points of contact with parts of Italian history in which Dante would feel much interest. He prophesied the fortunes of Can Grande (*Vill.* x. 101, 148); he practised astrology at the Court of Frederick II. at Bologna (Jac. della Cana); he foretold the decline and fall of Florence—"Non diu stabit stolidi Florentia florum."—*Scart.* The date of his death makes it possible that Dante may have met him. At any rate, his fame would have lingered at Bologna, probably also at Paris and Oxford, when Dante studied in those cities. It may be noted further, (1) that he was befriended by Gregory IX.; (2) that Fabonacci, the great mathematician of the 13th century, dedicated a treatise to him; (3) that he studied at Oxford, Paris, and Toledo, and made translations from Averrhoes; (4) that Pope Honorius gave him leave to hold two benefices in England (*Kington*, ii. 283, 441, 449-451). Roger Bacon, on the other hand, speaks scornfully of him as a pretender to science, and this may have influenced Dante's judgment (*Op. Tert.* i. 25). *Comp. Phil. in loc.*

<sup>118</sup> Of the two whose memory survives chiefly in this line, Guido Bonatti was an astrologer of Forlì of the 13th century, consulted mainly by Count Guido di Montefeltro and other Ghibelline leaders, whose plans were said to have been guided by him to a successful issue. He wrote a treatise on astrology which was much studied even by women (*Murat.* xxii. 150, 233-237, in *Scart.*). Asdente, "the cobbler of Parma," as he is called in *Conv.* iv. 16, is there named incidentally, as illustrating the difference between notoriety and true fame. Line 119 seems like a literal application of the familiar proverb *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Possibly it had vexed the soul of the poet to find the fame of the cobbler-wizard overshadowing his own.

<sup>121</sup> The witches thus described, true descendants of the Canidia of Horace (*Epod.* v.), were to be found in every town and village in Italy. The *modus*



But now come on, for hastens to his home  
 Cain with his thorns, where meet each hemisphere,<sup>125</sup>  
 And by Seviglia dips in ocean's foam.  
 And lo! last night the moon did round appear;  
 Well shouldst thou mind it, for it served not ill  
 Ofttimes thy wanderings through the forest drear."<sup>130</sup>  
 So spake he to me, and we went on still.

## CANTO XXI

*The Fifth Bolgia—The Peculators—The Ancient of Santa  
 Zita—The Pranks of the Demons*

So on from bridge to bridge, discussing theme  
 Of which my Comedy cares not to tell,  
 We went; and when we gained the point extreme,  
 There did we pause to view another dell  
 Of Malebolge, and more wailings vain,<sup>5</sup>  
 And saw a wondrous darkness o'er it dwell.  
 As when Venetian ships in dock remain,  
 The clammy pitch boils up in winter-tide  
 To fit their unsound hulls for sea again;

*operandi* had been handed down from a remote prehistoric past. Mould a waxen image to represent the person over whom the spell is to be cast: prick it with pins, or let it melt slowly before a fire, and pain and wasting will be the victim's portion. The "herbs" imply love-potions, or the reverse. Practically such women often carried on a direct trade in poisoning.

<sup>125</sup> The two hemispheres, it must be remembered, in Dante's cosmography were those of which Jerusalem and the Mount of Purgatory were respectively the centres.

<sup>127</sup> The dark spots on the moon—the "man in the moon" of popular English speech—were in the Middle Age legends of Italy the image of Cain holding a burning bush, and condemned, as in *Gen.* iv. 12, to perpetual wandering. The legend is noticed also in *Par.* ii. 51; *Conv.* ii. 14. The setting of the moon beyond Seville (one notes, as in *C.* xi. 113-115, the display of astronomical accuracy) indicates the hour before sunrise on the second day of the pilgrimage, reckoning from the full moon.

<sup>1</sup> We enter on the fifth Bolgia of the eighth circle, and find ourselves among the givers and takers of bribes. Ruskin (*F. C.* xviii. 11) sees in the boiling pitch the symbol of the money in which corruption finds its motive and its home, clinging to, and defiling everything.

<sup>7</sup> The old arsenal of Venice (the word is traced to the Arabic *darṣanah*=



They cannot put to sea, so there abide ; 10  
     One mends the timber, and one caulks anew  
     The ribs of ship that many a sea has tried,  
 There one the stem and one the stern drives through,  
     Some fashion oars and some the cordage twine,  
     The mainsail or the mizen some renew ; 15  
 So, not by fire, but by a skill divine,  
     Thick viscid pitch seethes ever there below,  
     Which as with birdlime all the bank did line.  
 I looked on it, but no more saw I so  
     Than bubbles which the boiling drove on high ; 20  
     First swelling out, and then collapsing low.  
 While I, with downward gazing, turned mine eye,  
     My Guide, crying out to me, "Beware ! beware !"  
     Drew me to him from where I stood hard by ;  
 And then I turned, as one who longs to dare 25  
     To gaze on what behoveth him to flee,  
     Yet stands unmanned by terror unaware,  
 Who slacketh not his flight through wish to see ;  
     And then behind I saw a demon black  
     Come running on the crag full speedily. 30  
 Ah me ! how eager was he to attack !  
     How bitter seemed he to me in his deed !  
     With open wings, and on his feet not slack.  
 His shoulders, high and curved, were sharp indeed,  
     And bore a sinner with his legs astride, 35  
     And grasping both his feet did he proceed,

house of industry ; Diez. *Etym. Wörterb.* 3rd ed. vol. i. p. 34), constructed in 1104, fortified with walls and towers, was one of the most famous in Europe in the 13th century. There were constructed the galleys which were the strength of the Venetian navy. The picture is obviously drawn from life, probably at the time of Dante's visit to Venice in 1314. We have seen in C. xix. 80 that this portion of the *Inferno* was at least revised after that date. May we think of Marco Polo as taking the poet to see what was to him the most interesting scene in Venice ? Comp. note on C. xvii. 17.

<sup>35</sup> We enter on the most grotesque of all the scenes of the *Inferno*, the pantomime, as it were, of Hell. That grotesqueness was, it need not be said (see note on C. v. 4), essentially mediæval, and was probably reproduced from some of the dramatic mysteries which were then common throughout Europe, and of which the memorable performance on the Ponte

"Ho, Malebranche, of our bridge," he cried,  
 "Lo! here of Santa Zita's Ancients one;  
 Plunge him down there till I once more have hied  
 Back to that land, which with them is o'errun: 40  
 All, save Bonturo, are corrupters there,  
 And No is turned to Yes by base pence won."  
 He flung him down, and on the hard rock bare  
 He turned, and never mastiff unleashed sped  
 With steps so swift the hunted thief to tear. 45  
 The other sank, then rose with downward head,  
 And then the demons whom the bridge did hide  
 Cried, "Here no Holy Face is worshippèd;

Carraia at Florence in 1304 was a conspicuous instance. I have thought it best to keep the Italian names of the demon actors, and will content myself with indicating their meaning. Malebranche = Evil-claws; Malacoda = Evil-tail; Scarmiglione = Lacerator; Alichino = Wing-drooper; Calcabrina = Trample-snow (snow or hoar-frost, probably in irony for the boiling pitch); Barbariccia = Ugly-beard; Cagnazzo = Dog-face; Libicocco = Devil-moor; Draghinazzo = Dragon-face; Ciriatto = Swine-face; Graffiacane = Grappler; Farfarello = Brawler; Rubicante = Ruddy-face. These are the *dramatis personæ* of the strange burlesque drama that follows.

<sup>38</sup> The "ancients" (*anziani*) were at Lucca what the Priori were at Florence, an elective magistracy representing the five "regions" of the city. The offender, not named, was probably sufficiently indicated by this description. Santa Zita (*d.* 1278) was the heroine-saint whom Lucca had chosen as its patron. A story which makes her, as it were, the Pamela of the 13th century (Zita = maidservant) had led to her being venerated as a saint prior to her formal canonisation (*Amp.* pp. 243-250). The tomb of the saint is in the Church of St. Frediano. On the *fešta* of the saint her mummy is exposed and her shrine visited by every maidservant in Lucca, each offering a nosegay (*Hare*, ii. 499).

<sup>41</sup> No contemporary records speak of Bonturo Dati as corrupt in office, and the statements of early commentators are too apt to be simply built upon their text. What is known of him is that he took a prominent part in a quarrel between Lucca and Pisa in 1314, and that he was therefore living when Dante wrote. The grim irony of the exception reminds one of Porson's epigram—"All except Hermann; and he too's a German." Dante, it may be noted, had sojourned in Lucca in 1314 for some months. The incisive condemnation of corruption (*baratteria*) was perhaps emphasised by the fact that this was the very charge on which Dante himself had been wrongfully condemned.

<sup>48</sup> The "holy face" was the head of the Christ on a wooden crucifix, said to have been the work of angel hands, who finished what had been begun by Nicodemus. It was the great relic of Lucca. Men swore by it (it was the favourite oath of William Rufus) and cried to it for help; and the point of the taunt is that that cry is profitless in Hell. The crucifix, a work of early Byzantine art, is that to be seen in the Duomo of Lucca (*Amp.* l. c.; *Hare*, ii. 495). The Serchio, a river outside the walls of Lucca, was the common bathing-place of its citizens.

Far other swimming this than Serchio's tide ;  
Therefore, unless thou seek'st our hooks to taste, 50  
Take heed thou rise not from the pitch outside."  
Then him with more than hundred hooks they chased,  
And said, "Here covered thou thy dance must take,  
And, if thou canst, for secret pilfering haste."  
Not otherwise do cooks their scullions make 55  
Thrust flesh half down the caldron with their prong,  
Lest it should through the seething surface break.  
"That thou appear not here," my Master's tongue  
Spake to me, "crouch thou here behind a rock,  
That so its shadow o'er thee may be flung ; 60  
And let no outrage offered to me shock  
Or cause thee fear ; all these things have I known :  
Long time ago I met this scuffling flock."  
Then passed he from the bridge's topmost stone,  
And as towards the sixth bank he drew near, 65  
'Twas meet his face should be as tranquil shown.  
Then with the furious rage and madness sheer  
With which upon a beggar dogs rush on,  
Who on a sudden halts and asks alms there,  
So from beneath the bridge they rushed each one, 70  
And turned against him every grappling hook.  
But he cried out, "Let ill-intent be none !  
Before ye seize me with your torturing crook,  
Let one among you forward come and hear ;  
Then let him, ere he seize, for counsel look." 75  
"Let Malacoda," they all cried, "appear."  
Then one came forward while the rest stood by,  
And as he came he said, "What good is here ?"

55-139 It does not seem expedient to annotate the details of the wild drama that follows. Briefly, the demons, as before, try to resist the progress of the pilgrims. Virgil interposes to warn them (as he had warned Charon, C. iii. 95) that it is useless to resist the will of Heaven, and Dante, who had hid himself in terror, comes forth reassured, and the chief of the demons sends the travellers with an escort. The fiend-pictures of the elder Teniers (Visions of St. Antony and the like) give one some notion of what was before the poet's inward eye.

"What, Malacoda ! thinkest thou that I  
Thus far have ventured," then my Master said, 80  
"Till now secure from all the tricks you try,  
Without God's will, and fate propitious made ?  
Let me pass on ; another, so wills Heaven,  
By me must through this wildered way be led."  
Then to his haughty mood a shock was given, 85  
So that his hook he let fall at his feet,  
Then to the rest, "Now let him not be driven."  
And then my Guide : "O thou who hast thy seat,  
Squat, squat among the crags that bridge the pit,  
Now may'st thou safely stir thee me to meet." 90  
And then I rose and quick to him did flit.  
So fiercely then the devils rushed on me,  
I feared they would some breach of faith commit.  
Thus full of fear I once those troops did see  
Who from Caprona issued, treaty-bound, 95  
When all around they saw the enemy.  
I to the spot then turned myself full round,  
Where stood my Guide, nor did I lift mine eye  
From off their face, which far from kind I found.  
They lowered their hooks, and "Will ye that I try 100  
To grab his hip ?" one to the others cried.  
"Yes, see thou nick him well," they made reply.  
And then that demon who with my good Guide  
Discourse had held, all suddenly turned round  
And said, "Peace, peace, Scarmiglione, quiet bide ;" 105  
Then spake to us, "No further path is found  
Here on this rock, for there the sixth arch lies,  
All crushed and shattered in the depth profound.

<sup>94</sup> A distinctly personal reminiscence. Caprona was a fortress of the Pisans taken by the troops of Florence and Lucca in 1289. In the expedition Dante, then twenty-four, took part. The holders of the fortress had capitulated on terms which secured their lives, but the poet recalled their frightened looks when they came out of the gates and saw themselves in the middle of their foes (*Buti in Scart.*). Such, he says, was his look as he came out of his hiding-place.

But if to advance be pleasing in your eyes,  
 Upon this bank of stone pursue your way ; 110  
 Another rock is near which path supplies.  
 Five hours beyond this same hour yesterday,  
 Twelve hundred threescore years and six complete  
 Did make, since here the path in ruins lay.  
 I send in that direction comrades meet 115  
 To see if any doth himself upraise ;  
 Go on with them ; they will not you maltreat.  
 Come Alichino, Calcabrina," says  
 He then to them, "and thou Cagnazzo too,  
 Let Barbariccia show the ten their ways ; 120  
 Come, Draghinazzo, Libicocc', to view,  
 Ciriatto with his tusks, and Graffiacan,  
 Mad Rubicant and Farfarell, come you !  
 Upon the boiling pitch look well and scan ;  
 Let these in safety to the next crag go, 125  
 Which all unbroken doth the deep dens span."  
 "Ah me ! my Master," said I to him ; "lo !  
 What see I ? Let us guideless go alone,  
 If thou know'st how ; none for myself, I trow,  
 I ask, if still thy wonted skill is shown. 130  
 Dost thou not see them how their teeth they grind,  
 And with their eyebrows threaten us with woe ?"  
 And he to me : "Be not of fearful mind ;  
 Let them go on and gnash their teeth at will ;  
 Their victims they among those boiled ones find." 135  
 On the left dike they wheeled, but not until  
 Each had thrust out his tongue between his teeth,  
 And to their leader made their signal ill,  
 While trumpet notes from his back parts did breathe.

113 Another reference (see C. iv. 35, xii. 36) to the descent into Hades, the "harrowing of Hell" of our early English writers, assumed to coincide with March 25 or 26 A.D. 34. We need scarcely embarrass ourselves with the precise hour of the Crucifixion and the death which they imply. What may be noted is, as in C. xx. 126, that the pilgrims have reached the morning of the Saturday before Easter in A.D. 1300.

*The Fifth Bolgia—Ciampolo—Friar Gomita—Michael Zanche*

I HAVE seen knights break up their camp for war,  
 Begin the attack, and march in full array,  
 And sometimes seek a safe retreat afar ;  
 I've seen the vanguard o'er your fair fields stray,  
 Ye Aretines ; yea, seen the squadrons wheel, 5  
 And now in jousts and now in tourneys play,  
 Now with bell's chime and now with trumpet's peal,  
 With drums and beacons on the castle wall,  
 Our use, or that of alien commonweal ;  
 But never at so strange a bagpipe call 10  
 Saw I or horsemen move or infantry,  
 Or, at earth's signs or star's, a good ship tall.  
 With those ten demons we our course did ply ;  
 Fierce company were they, but "in the church  
 With saints, with gluttons to the hostelry." 15  
 Then to the pitch did I direct my search,  
 The fashion of that Bolgia dark to see,  
 And of the crew whom that fierce fire did scorch.

6 The reference to Caprona had apparently awakened other personal reminiscences of the days when Dante, then in the flower of his early manhood, had fought in the ranks of the Florentines. The battle referred to is probably that of Campaldino (1288), at the outset of which the cavalry of the Aretines were victorious. Eventually the Florentines under Vieri de' Cerchi rallied, and remained masters of the field (*Dino*; c. i. ; *Vill.* vii. 124, 131 ; *Faur.* i. 152). It adds to the interest of the reference to remember (1) that Dante's friend Guido Cavalcanti and Bernardino da Polenta, brother of Francesca, had been with him in the battle ; (2) that Buonconte di Montefeltro had been slain in it (*Purg.* v. 83) ; (3) that a letter of Dante's is extant in which he speaks of his "fear" at the beginning of the battle, and his "joy" in the victory (*Weg.* 86-88).

9 The "alien" usages refer probably to the German and French customs which, under the influence respectively of Frederick II. and Charles of Anjou, had mingled with the traditional tactics and equipments of the native Italian armies. The starting-point and goal of the description are somewhat shocking to our modern refinement, but mediæval humour, as, *e.g.*, in Chaucer, could be Rabelaisian and Aristophanic (*Nub.* 164-166) in its unshrinking breadth. The proverb of l. 14, the Italian equivalent of like proverbs in well-nigh all languages ("When at Rome, do as Rome does," &c.), reads almost like an *apologia* for the absence of all the conventional dignity of poetry.



As dolphins, when they signal give at sea  
 To sailors, with their backs all arched amain, 20  
 So that they plan how best the storm to flee,  
 So then, to seek some respite from his pain,  
 One of those sinners did his back upraise,  
 And quick as lightning hid himself again.  
 And as along a ditch's watery ways 25  
 Are seen the frogs with muzzles all thrust out,  
 So that their feet and bulk are hid from gaze ;  
 So stood the sinners everywhere about.  
 But soon as Barbariccia near them drew,  
 Beneath the boiling pitch they fled in rout. 30  
 I saw, and still the horror thrills me through,  
 One waiting so, as sometimes it doth chance  
 One frog remains while others dive from view,  
 And Graffiacan, who nearest did advance,  
 Seized him by locks all pitch-besmeared behind, 35  
 And dragged him, otter-like, before my glance.  
 Well did I know the names to each assigned,  
 So at the time when they were chosen, I  
 Did note, and as they called them, bore in mind.  
 "Ho, Rubicante, see that thou apply 40  
 Thy talons sharp behind, his back to flay,"  
 Then all those cursèd ones aloud did cry.  
 And I : "My Master, bid them, if thou may,  
 To let thee know that wretch unfortunate,  
 Thus fallen 'neath his adversaries' sway." 45  
 My Leader then drew near him where he sat,  
 And asked him who he was, and he replied,  
 "My birth was in Navarra's kingly state ;

<sup>19</sup> The comparison implies voyages in the Mediterranean Sea, or probably from Calais to Dover. Comp. C. xv. 4.

<sup>36</sup> The grotesque element becomes less and less restrained, and I will not follow it in its details. This may be noted, however, that even in our own time, and in the work of a master-poet, Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, this element of grotesqueness appears in a form so strikingly parallel, in all but coarseness, with Dante's as to suggest the idea of deliberate reproduction, though in this case it has, of course, no foundation.

<sup>48</sup> The earlier commentators give the name of the victim as Ciampolo,



To serve a lord I left my mother's side,  
 For she had borne me to a ribald vile, 50  
 Who flung himself and his estate aside.  
 Then served I in good Thibault's court awhile ;  
 There to deceit's foul sin did I descend,  
 And in this hot pitch pay for that my guile."  
 And Ciriatto, whose huge mouth did end 55  
 On either side, in tusks like those of swine,  
 Soon made him feel how they could fiercely rend.  
 "Among wild cats the mouse came," runs the line,  
 But Barbariccia while he him embraced,  
 Said "Back, till with my fork I him entwine." 60  
 Then thus, as turning, he my Master faced,  
 "Ask him," he said, "if more thou seek'st to  
 know,  
 Ere yet his form by others be defaced."  
 My Guide : "Of that vile crew I pray thee show  
 If thou dost know of any Latian there, 65  
 Beneath the pitch." And he : "Yea, there below  
 I left but now one born that region near ;  
 Would I were with him, covered by the tar !  
 For then nor claw nor grapnel would I fear."  
 And Libicocco, "We have borne too far," 70  
 Spake, and then seized his arms with curvèd  
 crook,  
 And gave a wrench that did his tendons mar ;

but content themselves with stating in prose what they found in Dante's verse, and add nothing to our knowledge. Dante himself names Thibault I. of Navarre as a poet (*V. E.* i. 9, ii. 5, 6), but that is all. He died in 1270, on his return from Tunis with the bones of St. Louis. The history would seem to have been the common one of a man rising to high estate and falling into all the arts of corruption.

67 This, as l. 81 shows, was the Friar Gomita of Gallura, a Sardinian, and therefore "near," though not of, Italy. Sardinia was at this time subject to Pisa, and the district of Gallura was under the government of Nino dei Visconti, grandson of Ugolino, who in his turn entrusted everything to Gomita. Charges of corruption were brought against him, and Nino, after at first disregarding them as slanders, afterwards ascertained them to be true, and condemned the friar to be hanged. Nino is named with honour as "gentle" in *Purg.* viii. 53. Comp. Note in *Arriv.* p. 113, C. xxxiii. 13.

And Draghinazzo sought to seize with hook  
 His legs ; but then their chief, Decurion,  
 Turned himself round and round with angry look. <sup>75</sup>  
 And when they were to peace a little won,  
 Of him, who still was gazing at his wound,  
 My Guide without delay made question :  
 " Who then was he, whom leaving, thou hast found  
 Such ill-success in coming to the shore ? " <sup>80</sup>  
 And he made answer, " Of Gallura's ground,  
 The friar Gomita, filled with fraud's base lore,  
 For he his lord's foes had beneath his hand,  
 Yet acted so that each exults the more. <sup>85</sup>  
 Money he took, and easy judgment planned  
 (So speaks he), and in other functions too  
 Sovereign, not subject, in corruption's band.  
 And Signor Michael Zanche joins his crew,  
 Of Logodoro : no fatigue can bind  
 Their talk of all they in Sardinia knew. <sup>90</sup>  
 Ah ! see how that one there his teeth doth grind !  
 I would say more, but fear that demon fell  
 To flay my hide should be too well inclined."  
 And then their Provost turned to Farfarell,  
 Whose eyes as if he meant to strike did glare, <sup>95</sup>  
 And said, " Stand off, thou spiteful bird of Hell ! "  
 " If more ye seek or to behold or hear,"  
 Then spoke once more the poor wretch terrified,  
 " Tuscans or Lombards, I will bring them near ;  
 But let those fierce-clawed demons stand aside, <sup>100</sup>  
 So that these may not fear their vengeance stern ;  
 And I, while I upon this spot abide,

<sup>74</sup> Decurion, the captain of the ten demons.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Zanche was governor of Logodoro, another district of Sardinia. The title of "Don" (*Donno* in the Italian) was the Sardinian equivalent of "signor." He was seneschal to Enzo, king of Sardinia, a natural son of Frederick II. (*Kington*, ii. 80), through his marriage with Adelasia, the heiress of that island, and after his death in prison at Bologna in 1271, married his widow Adelasia, and became lord of Logodoro. He was assassinated in 1275 by Branca d'Oria of Genoa (comp. C. xxxiii. 137). The two criminals are represented as talking over their ill deeds.

Although but one, will make seven hither turn,  
When I shall whistle, as we're wont to do  
When we a time to issue forth discern." 105

At this Cagnazzo raised his jowl to view,  
Wagging his head, and said, "His cunning hear,  
Which he has planned to plunge away from you!"  
And he, who had of tricks full plenteous share,  
Answered, "In sooth, too cunning far am I, 110  
When to my friends a greater ill I bear."

And Alichin gave way, against the cry  
Of all the rest, and said, "If thou dost leap,  
Not at full gallop will I on thee fly,  
But o'er the pitch my wings in motion keep. 115  
Leave we the heights and let the bank be screen,  
To see if thou the victory shalt reap."

Now, Reader, hear how frolic new was seen.  
Each turned his eyes towards the other side ;  
He first who most unwilling erst had been. 120

He of Navarre chose well the fitting tide,  
Set his feet firm on earth, and in a trice  
Plunged, and so left their wish ungratified.

Then in each fiend did sense of guilt arise,  
In him most who was cause of that defeat ; 125  
Wherefore he moves, and "Now thou'rt taken"  
cries.

But little gained he ; wings were not so fleet  
As fear ; and one his downward course did take,  
And one his wings in upward flight did beat.

Not otherwise than this the duck doth make 130  
Her sudden plunge when nears the falcon's flight,  
And he flies up, much vexed, with wings that ache.

Then Calcabrina, mocked and full of spite,  
Went flying on behind him, not displeased  
By that escape to have a ground for fight. 135

131-139 Another image from falconry. Comp. C. xvii. 127.

And when the great corrupter's presence ceased,  
 He turned his claws his comrade fiend to hold,  
 And o'er the moat upon his carcase seized ;  
 But he too was a falcon keen and bold,  
 And grappled with him, and together they 140  
 Fell, and within the seething pool both rolled.  
 The burning heat disparted them straightway,  
 But all their power to raise themselves was gone,  
 Such thick cement upon their pinions lay.  
 Then Barbariccia and his troop made moan, 145  
 And bade four hasten from the farther coast  
 With all their prongs, and nimbly they sped on,  
 This side and that they went down to their post :  
 They thrust their hooks towards the birdlimed pair,  
 Whom that hot scurf-crust did already roast ; 150  
 And so we left them both entangled there.

## CANTO XXIII

*The Sixth Bolgia—Departure of the Demons—The Hypocrites—  
 The Friars Joyous—Caiaphas*

SILENT, alone, with no companion near,  
 We journeyed, one before and one behind  
 (So Minor Friars when they walk appear);  
 And Æsop's fable came into my mind,  
 As my thoughts brooded o'er that recent brawl, 5  
 That, where the tale of frog and mouse we find;

<sup>3</sup> The picture of the Minor Friars was one which might have been seen in any town in Italy, but, looking to the facts stated in note on C. xvi. 106, we can scarcely help connecting it with the fact that Dante himself had probably taken part in such processions as a tertiary of the Order of St. Francis.

<sup>4</sup> The fable is not found in those commonly ascribed to Æsop, but appears in the life of that writer by Maximus Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, in the 14th century (*d.* after 1340), and is now commonly included in the appendix to *Phædrus* as Fable vi. It runs thus: "A mouse invited a frog to supper in a rich man's larder. After the feast the frog gave a return-invitation, and as the mouse couldn't swim, proposed to take him in tow, tied

Not more alike do *mo* and *issa* fall  
 Than one was to the other, if the end  
 And the beginning we to mind recall.  
 And as one thought to others birth doth lend, 10  
 So out of that another straightway rose,  
 Which made me 'neath a doubled terror bend.  
 So thought I : "These, out-tricked and mocked by  
 foes,  
 We being the cause, with loss of such a kind,  
 I needs must think 'twill them to ill dispose, 15  
 If anger with their malice be combined,  
 They will pursue us, fiercer far than hound  
 Pursues the hare he snaps at from behind."  
 Already every hair on end I found  
 With fear, and, full of care, I stood aside, 20  
 Then spake: "O Master, if no hiding-ground  
 Be shown for me and thee, I'm terrified  
 At these same evil-clawed ones. There behind  
 They come; in thought I hear them at our side."  
 "Were I a mirror, glass with lead combined," 25  
 He said, "not sooner thee I'd image there  
 Than now thy soul's clear likeness here I find.  
 It was but now thy thoughts to mine came near,  
 As with like gesture and like presence seen, 30  
 So that the twain did common counsel bear.  
 If it so chance the right bank down doth lean,  
 That to another Bolgia we descend,  
 Then shall we 'scape that fancied chase, I ween."

by a string, to his home in the water. The mouse, as he was drowning, foretold that an avenger would appear before long. An eagle seeing the body floating on the water, swooped down and devoured them both." The fable had probably found its way into a Latin reading-book of the 13th century.

<sup>7</sup> *Mo*, as in C. x. 21, xxiii. 28, *et al.*, was old Italian for *adesso*, of which *issa*, still used in Lombardy and near Chur, is another form.

<sup>25</sup> This was, it need hardly be said, the ordinary construction of mediæval mirrors. A like comparison occurs in *Conv.* iii. 9. The thought is that of "face answering to face," as in *Prov.* xxvii. 19. *Comp. Par.* ii. 89.

Nor had he brought his counsel to an end,  
 When I beheld them with their wings outspread, 25  
 Not far, and with intent to seize us, bend.  
 Then suddenly my Guide his arms did fling  
 Around me, as a mother, roused by cries,  
 Sees the fierce flames around her gathering,  
 And takes her boy, nor ever halts, but flies, 30  
 Caring for him than for herself far more,  
 Though one scant shift her only robe supplies.  
 Then he, from that high marge of stony shore,  
 Gave himself headlong to the pendent rock  
 Which one side of the Bolgia lappeth o'er, 35  
 Never ran stream with such a rushing shock  
 Adown the sluice to turn a water-mill,  
 When it comes close upon the mill-wheel's dock,  
 As did my Master down that sloping hill, 40  
 Still bearing up my form upon his breast,  
 As though not friend, but son, his arms did fill.  
 Scarce had his feet the very bottom pressed  
 Of that deep pit, when they the summit gained  
 Above us; but his fear was laid to rest;  
 For the high Providence that these ordained 45  
 At the fifth fosse to keep their post as guard,  
 There, without power to leave it them detained.  
 A painted people there met our regard,  
 Who round and round still moved with tardy pace,  
 Weeping, with features worn and spent and 50  
 marred ;  
 Cloaks had they, with hoods low o'er eyes and face  
 Down-hanging, made in fashion like to those  
 Which at Cologne are worn by monkish race,

<sup>38</sup> Vivid as the picture is, and obviously drawn from life, it is still more striking in the symbolism which underlies it. In Virgil, as the type of the higher human wisdom, Dante had found more than guidance, more than illumination—an absolutely maternal tenderness.

<sup>55</sup> The demons had their work confined to the fifth Bolgia. The pilgrims now pass to the sixth, where they find themselves among the hypocrites.

<sup>63</sup> In spite of the *v. l.* of Clugni, or of a conjectural identification with a



O'erlaid without with gold, that dazzling shows,  
 Within all lead, and of such crushing weight, 65  
 That those had seemed of straw that Frederick  
 chose.

O everlasting weary robe of state!  
 We turned ourselves toward the left again  
 With them, intent on their wail desolate,  
 But through the weight, that folk, outworn with pain, 70  
 So slowly moved, that we new comrades still  
 Found, as each forward step by us was ta'en.  
 Then said I to my Guide, "Find, if thou will,  
 Some one by name or action to us known,  
 And as thou go'st, let thine eyes gaze their fill." 75  
 And one who heard my speech of Tuscan tone,  
 Cried to us from behind, "Stay ye your feet,  
 Ye who through this dusk air are running on;  
 What thou dost seek, from me perchance thou'lt  
 greet."

And then my Leader turned and bade me "Wait, 80  
 And then thy footsteps to his motion mete."  
 I stood, and saw two forms in hurry great  
 Of purpose and of look to come to me,  
 But their strait path and burden made them late.  
 When they came near, with side-glance steadfastly 85  
 They looked at me, but not a word they spake;  
 Then whispered to each other secretly,

Cologne in the Veronese territory, there is little doubt that the more famous Cologne is meant; and if so, we have another trace of the extent of Dante's travels. It is obvious that he may have travelled by the Rhine on his way to or from Bruges (C. xv. 4). The story of the hoods was not without a touch of humour likely to attract a mind like Dante's. The monks of an abbey in Cologne, it was said, wanted a fuller recognition of their dignity, and applied to the Pope to wear scarlet hoods trimmed with fur, after the manner of the doctors of the universities. He taught them a lesson of humility by ordering them to wear hoods of a dark grey serge, so long that they trailed behind them as they walked.

<sup>66</sup> The story ran that Frederick II. had punished traitors, *e.g.*, Count Regnier di Manente, by putting hoods of lead over their heads and then exposing them to the heat of a furnace, which caused the lead to melt (*Kington*, i. 475).

“His throat gives proof he living breath doth take;  
 And if they're dead, by what especial grace  
 Do they their journey with no hood's weight  
 make?” 90

Then said to me: “O thou of Tuscan race,  
 Who to the guild of hypocrites art come,  
 To tell us who thou art count no disgrace.”  
 And I: “I had my birth and found my home  
 In the great city hard by Arno fair, 95  
 And in my own true body here I roam;  
 But who are ye, on whose wan cheeks despair,  
 E'en as I see, in many a tear doth flow,  
 And what this torment that on you doth glare?” 100

And one replied, “These orange hoods do so  
 Crush with their leaden burden, that the weight  
 Doth make the scale to creak and groan below;  
 Friars Joyous were we, of Bologna late;  
 His name Lodringo, Catalano mine, 105  
 And both together chosen by thy state,  
 As oft to one man men the task assign,  
 To keep its peace, and how we worked our will  
 Thou may'st around Gardingo's walls divine.”  
 And I began: “O friars, your deeds ill . . . .” 110  
 But more I said not, for before mine eye  
 One on the ground, by three stakes pierced, lay still,

<sup>88</sup> The shadow forms of the dead exist without breathing, and they note in the movement of Dante's throat that he is not one of them.

<sup>103</sup> The Friars Joyous were, strictly speaking, brothers of the Military Order of the Knights of St. Mary, some priests, some laymen, married or unmarried, instituted by Urban IV. (*d.* 1264) at Bologna to fight the Saracens. Like the Templars, they acquired the reputation of leading easy and luxurious lives, and hence their popular sobriquet (= *Frères Bons-Vivants*). The two here named, as respectively representing Guelph and Ghibelline tendencies, were invited in 1266 by the Ghibellines of Florence to do conjointly what was commonly done by a single Podestà, and restore order between the contending factions. As it was, they were just so far impartial as to take bribes from both sides (*Vill.* vii. 13; *Malisp.* c. 190), betraying each in turn. Guido of Arezzo (*Purg.* xxiv. 56), the poet, was said to have joined the Order. Comp. *Faur.* i. 346.

<sup>108</sup> Gardingo, a district of Florence, near the Palazzo Vecchio, is named as containing the houses of the Uberti which had been destroyed by order of the two Podestàs.

Who, when he saw me, writhed in agony,  
And, sobbing, breathed his sighs through shaggy beard.  
And when Fra Catalan did this espy,  
He said, "This man, whom thou dost see thus  
speared,

Gave counsel to the Pharisees 'twas meet  
By one man's death the nation's guilt were cleared.  
Impaled and naked lies he in our street,  
As thou perceivest, and he needs must know  
The weight of whoso passeth by his feet.

And his wife's father suffereth equal woe  
Here in this fosse, and all that Sanhedrim,  
Seed whence great evils to the Jews did grow."  
Then saw I Virgil wondering much at him  
Who there was lying stretched upon the cross,  
In everlasting exile drear and grim.

Then to the friar he thus his words did toss:  
 "Think it not hard to tell us, if thou may,  
 If on the right is any path across,  
 By which we twain might outward take our way,  
 Without constraining any black fiends drear  
 To take and bear us from this pit away?"

Then answered he, "Beyond thy hopes is near  
A rock from yon great circle, that awry  
Is stretched, and spans each cruel valley here,  
Save that o'er this it comes not, but doth lie  
All broken; on its ruins thou may'st go,  
For down it slopes, and at the base mounts high."

<sup>115</sup> Comp. *John* xviii. 14. The punishment described in l. 120 seems to reproduce the thought of *Isaiah* li. 23. Caiaphas differs from the other hypocrites in being naked, with no hoods such as they wore, and in being crucified, suffering eternally the doom to which he had consigned the Just One. Virgil's wonder (l. 124) may be thought of as springing from the fact that Caiaphas had not been there when he last made his descent into Hell (C. ix. 22).

134 The great circle is the outer rim of the pit of the Malebolge. The bridge of rock which spanned the other pits was here broken down, the crash being thought of as one of the effects of the earthquake of *Matt.* xxviii, so that the pilgrims had to clamber up the broken masses of rock.

A little while my Guide stood, head bent low,  
 Then said, "Full ill did he the matter tell 140  
 Who with his hook drags sinners to their woe."  
 And then the friar: "I at Bologna well  
 Recall the vices to the Devil laid,  
 'A liar, of all lies the parent fell.'" 145  
 Soon did my Guide pass on with hastened tread,  
 His face disturbed a little by his wrath;  
 Then, from those crushed ones parting, as he led,  
 I followed where those dear feet traced their path.

## CANTO XXIV

*The Clamber up the Rock—The Seventh Bolgia—The Robber  
 Vanni Fucci*

IN that first season of the youthful year,  
 When the sun's locks the chill Aquarius slakes,  
 And now the nights to half the day draw near,  
 When on the ground the hoar-frost semblance makes 5  
 Of the fair image of her sister white,  
 But soon her brush its colour true forsakes,  
 The peasant churl, whose store is emptied quite,  
 Rises and looks around, and sees the plains  
 All whitened, and for grief his hip doth smite,  
 Turns to his house, and up and down complains, 10  
 Like the poor wretch who knows not what to do;  
 Then back he turns, and all his hope regains,

Line 140 refers to the assurance given by Malacoda (C. xxi. 111) that they would find a pathway.

<sup>142</sup> Catalano speaks as one who had studied theology at Bologna and remembered the words of *John* viii. 44.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase "hoar frost, the sister of snow," will remind the reader of "dust, the sister of mud," in *Æsch. Agam.* 495. The comparison is among the longest and most vivid of any in the poem, and is a typical example of the union of the power that observes the phenomena of external nature with insight into human feelings as affected by them.

Seeing the world present an altered hue,  
In little time, and takes his shepherd's crook,  
And drives his lambs to roam through pastures new; <sup>15</sup>  
So when I saw my Master's troubled look,  
It made me also grieved and sick at heart,  
And for that ill a plaster soon I took.  
For when we reached the bridge's broken part,  
My Guide's glance turned to me with sweetness  
fraught, <sup>20</sup>  
As when from that hill's foot I first did start.  
His arms he stretched when he awhile had thought  
In counsel with himself, and well had scanned  
The crag, and both to meet around me brought;  
And like to him who works with thought and hand, <sup>25</sup>  
(For forward still his glance is ever thrown),  
So lifting me to where I did command  
A great rock's peak, he marked another stone,  
Saying, "Next on that one there lay thou thy hold,  
But let its strength to bear thee first be shown." <sup>30</sup>  
No way was that for one in hood enrolled,  
For he so light, and I, by him upborne,  
Could scarcely scramble up from fold to fold.  
And were it not that on that margin's bourne  
The way was shorter far than elsewhere, <sup>35</sup>  
(Of him I know not), I had been outworn;  
But because Malebolge still doth bear  
Downward, and to the deepest pit descend,  
Such is the structure of each valley there  
That this side upward, that doth downward bend. <sup>40</sup>  
We came, however, to that point at last,  
Whence the last stone, thrust forward, doth impend.

<sup>21-45</sup> The description, like its parallels in C. xii. 1-10, implies a certain want of muscularity. The poet's memories of rock-climbing were not those of a member of the Alpine Club. Such experiences seemed to him to belong rather to the scenery of the Inferno than to that of the "serene" and enjoyable life of earth. The reminiscence of the "sweet look" in l. 20 suggests, however, the thought that we have a parable of a spiritual difficulty, help coming now as it had come at first (C. i. 76).

So spent my breath was with that climbing fast,  
When I was up I could no farther go,  
And so sat down, that weary toil being past. 45  
“Now is it meet thou be no longer slow,”  
My Master said, “for not on couch of down  
Come men to fame, nor coverlet below;  
And whoso spends his life without renown  
Leaves of himself upon the earth such trace 50  
As smoke in air, or foam on water blown.  
Therefore bestir thyself, thy trouble face  
With that brave soul that wins in every fight,  
Unless it share thy heavier body’s case.  
Thou yet must climb a longer stairway’s flight; 55  
’Tis not enough to have left that crew behind;  
If thou dost hear me, act thereon aright.”  
Then did I rise in somewhat better wind  
Than I had thought to feel myself before,  
And said, “On then; new strength within I find!” 60  
Then on the path of rock we onward bore,  
Which we found rough, and difficult, and strait,  
And steeper far than that we had passed o’er.  
Talking I went, to hide my feeble state;  
Then from the next moat lo! a voice was heard, 65  
Speaking in accents scarce articulate;  
Of all it said I caught no single word,  
Though on the summit of the arch I stood,  
But he who spake appeared to anger stirred.  
I stooped; no eyes, with fullest life imbued, 70  
Could pierce the abysmal depth of that obscure;  
Then said I, “Master, may it please thy mood

<sup>46</sup> The words remind one of Milton's *Lycidas*. The two poets were alike in their burning desire for fame, and in their sense that those who seek it must “scorn delights and live laborious days.” For l. 53, see the parallel of *Purg.* xvi. 75-78. The “longer stairway” of l. 55 is that of the Mount of Purgatory.

<sup>64</sup> One may perhaps see in this another personal reminiscence. Most Alpine travellers will remember how commonly the worst climber of the party is the one who will keep talking in order to show that he has strength for the work before him.



To reach the next round and descent ensure,  
 For as I hear and nothing understand,  
 So when I look, my sight is dim and poor." 75  
 "No other answer," said he, "thy demand  
 Shall have but action, for a good request  
 In silence should be met with act and hand."  
 Then from the bridge our downward course we pressed,  
 Where with the right bank it connects its way, 80  
 And then the pit to me was manifest.  
 And there I saw a terrible array  
 Of serpents, of such diverse form and mien,  
 That mere remembrance doth my blood's flow stay.  
 No more let Libya's sands boast they have seen 85  
 Such; though they adders, vipers, dragons, bear,  
 With monstrous hydras and the amphisbene,  
 Yet plagues so great and of such evil rare,  
 With Ethiopia joined, they never showed,  
 Nor all that by the Red Sea's waters are. 90  
 Among this fierce and miserable crowd  
 There ran a people naked, terrified,  
 No hope of cave or heliotrope allowed.  
 Behind their backs their hands with snakes were tied,  
 Their head and tail the reins they twisted o'er, 95  
 In front their tangled folds they multiplied;

73 The precise position of the travellers, as seen here and in l. 79, is that they have clambered up the rocks which led from the seventh Bolgia, over which there was no bridge, to the bridge which spans the eighth. They descend, for the bridge slopes downward, but do not go down into that Bolgia, contenting themselves with what they see in glancing down from the bridge.

82 One ventures to think that at this point the quick spontaneous imagination of the poet began for a while to flag. By way of compensation he falls back upon reminiscences of his two favourite poets, Lucan and Ovid, and deliberately endeavours to surpass them in the strangeness and elaborateness of his description. His first picture is, as it were, a *replica* of Lucan's description of the Libyan desert (ix. 706-721), in which he exhausts the whole vocabulary of serpent classification. In the "Red Sea" there is probably an allusion to the "fiery serpents" of *Numbers* xxi. 6.

94 The "heliotrope" of the Middle Ages was not a flower, but a stone, the bloodstone of modern lapidaries, which was believed to act either as an amulet against venomous serpents or to make the wearer invisible.

And lo ! at one who halted near our shore,  
 There came a serpent, and transfix'd him there,  
 Just where his neck and chin the shoulders bore.  
 Nor O nor I so fast could one write here, 100  
 As he blazed up and burnt, and in his fall  
 Was turned perforce to ashes dry and sere.  
 And when to earth he fell and perished, all  
 The ashes of themselves together came,  
 And him forthwith did to himself recall; 105  
 So to great sages there is known the fame  
 That thus the Phœnix dies and lives again,  
 When he five hundred years of life can claim,  
 Nor herbs nor any grass its life sustain,  
 But only tears of incense and of spice, 110  
 And nard and myrrh for winding-sheet remain.  
 As one who falls, nor knows by what device  
 The demon's force has dragg'd him to the ground,  
 Nor other seizure that a man's strength ties,  
 When he ariseth looketh all around, 115  
 All dazed and stunned with that great agony  
 Which he has borne, and heaves a sigh profound,  
 So rose that sinner then in misery.  
 Justice of God ! O how severe 'tis seen,  
 That rains such woes in vengeance from on high ! 120  
 My Guide then questioned him who he had been,  
 And he replied, " I from Toscana down  
 Fell but just now this cruel gorge within ;  
 A bestial life, not man's, my joy did crown,  
 Mule as I was. Lo ! Vanni Fucci I, 125  
 Fit den for beast like me Pistoia's known."

<sup>106</sup> The description of the Phœnix seems reproduced from Ovid (*Met.* xv. 392-402), the poet whom Dante was at this stage of his poem striving to outdo. His master, Brunetto, gives a like account, fixing the scene of the transformation at Heliopolis (*Trés.* v. 26).

<sup>126</sup> The story of Vanni Fucci (given in full by *Benv.*) may be briefly told. He was the bastard son of Fuccio de Lazari, one of the chief citizens of Pistoia, and, in compaoy with other comrades in profligacy, plundered the Church of St. Jacopo in that city of its sacred vessels. Another citizen, Rampino, was suspected, but in order to save him, the criminal confessed

Then to my Guide I said, "Bid him not fly,  
 And ask what crime has thrust him here below;  
 He, man of blood and wrath, once met mine eye."  
 Nor was the sinner, when he heard me, slow 130  
 To tell it, but on me fixed face and mind,  
 And was all painted as with shame and woe;  
 Then spake, "It grieves me more that thou dost find  
 Me in this woe wherein thou see'st me lie  
 Than when I left that other life behind. 135  
 What thou dost ask me I may not deny;  
 Thus low I am cast down because I stole  
 The goodly treasure from the sacristy,  
 And false blame fell upon another soul.  
 But that thou find not joy in such a sight, 140  
 If thou shalt ever leave this darksome hole  
 Open thine ears and hear what I recite.  
 Pistoia first doth thin the Neri out,  
 Then Florence changes men and manners quite;  
 From Val di Magra Mars a blast draws out, 145  
 A vale which with dark clouds is overspread,  
 And with tempestuous storms and utter rout

his guilt and was hanged. He had been one of the Neri of Pistoia, and Dante, as one of the Bianchi of Florence, had apparently (l. 129) heard of other outrages. He is said, however, to have been among the poets of the time, and Crescimbeni has preserved a couplet in which he mourns, as in the tones of despair, at "having lost the good which once he might have had" (*Ist. Volg. Poes.* ii. 99). The bitterness with which Dante speaks here and elsewhere of Pistoia connects itself with the fact that he saw in it the birth-place of those hateful parties of the Blacks and Whites that had wrecked his own life and brought misery into his city.

<sup>140</sup> Another prophecy after the event, analogous to those of Ciacco (C. vi. 64) and Farinata (C. x. 79), is put into Vanni's lips. The facts were (1) that the Bianchi of Pistoia, helped by those of Florence, expelled the Neri in May 1301. (2) In November 1301, Charles of Valois' arrival made the Neri of Florence masters of the situation, so that Florence changed "men and manners," and the Bianchi were stamped out by Corso Donati and his party. Moroello of Malaspina, of the Val di Magra, at the head of the Pistoian Neri, attacks the Bianchi of that city in the Campo Piceno, and defeats them, and the Neri of Florence expel their Bianchi, Dante among them. The prophecy, as in l. 151, was meant to vex his soul with the fear of coming evil. No battle in Campo Piceno is mentioned by historians. Dante, however, was likely to know, especially as Moroello was afterwards, for a time, his friend and host, and to him the poet dedicated his

Piceno's plain shall witness battle dread,  
 And he that cloud shall suddenly break through,  
 That each Bianco shall be smitten dead. 150  
 And this I tell thy sorrow to renew."

## CANTO XXV

*The Bolgia of the Serpents—Cianfa dei Donati and Others—  
 The Man and Serpent Transformation Scenes*

His speech being ended, then that thief did raise  
 His hands with thumbs thrust out in scornful guise,  
 Crying, "Take this, God; Thine be this dispraise."  
 Then looked I on the snakes with friendly eyes,  
 For one around his neck itself entwined, 5  
 As if it said, "No more of such replies."  
 Another came and both his arms did bind,  
 So tightly curling round in front, that he  
 No power to make a single turn could find.  
 Ah me! Pistoia, why not make decree 10  
 To burn thyself to dust and disappear,  
 Since thou in guilt excell'st thine ancestry?

*Purgatorio. Scart.* refers the prophecy to the siege and capture of Serravalle in 1302 (*Vill.* viii. 52); others to that of Pistoia (*Vill.* viii. 82).

<sup>1</sup> The special gesture, known technically as the "fig," was that of thrusting the thumb between the two fore-fingers. As with other like gestures, the thumb-biting of *Romeo and Juliet* (i. 1), or the modern English of "taking a sight," it is scarcely worth while tracing its significance to its source. Each in its time has been the starting-point of quarrels ending in bloodshed. The Italian "a fico" for this or that, as in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. 3, shows that it was still common in the 16th century. Curiously enough, Sacchetti (*Nov.* 95) tells a story of an ass-driver who made this gesture at Dante himself. The enemies of Florence showed their scorn by putting, on a tower at Carmignano, two arms of marble, making the *fico* at the city which they held up to opprobrium (*Vill.* vi. 5). The Florentines destroyed the tower in 1228. In the statutes of Prato this act was named, when done after Fucci's fashion, as a blasphemous outrage, punishable by fine or flogging.

<sup>11</sup> *A v. l. ingenerare* for *incenerarti*, gives, "why dost not thou refrain from begetting children?" The "ancestry" refers to the tradition, in which the Florentines exulted, that they had sprung from the noble stock of Rome, while Pistoia owed its origin to the disbanded troops of Catiline.

In all Hell's many circles dark and drear,  
 No spirit saw I against God so proud,  
 Not he who fell from walls that Thebes did rear. 15  
 He fled, nor spake another word aloud.  
 And then I saw a Centaur with fierce din  
 Crying out, "What region doth this scorner shroud?"  
 Maremma's self doth no such treasure win,  
 I trow, of snakes as he had on his back, 20  
 As far as where man's visage doth begin.  
 Over his shoulders, at the neck-bone's rack,  
 A dragon lay, with fiery wings outspread,  
 And sets ablaze whoever him attack.  
 "There standeth Cacus," then my Master said, 25  
 "Who 'neath the rocky crag of Aventine  
 Made many a pool with blood that he had shed.  
 Not with his brothers moves he in one line,  
 By reason of his subtle robbery,  
 When they were near him, of the herd of kine, 30  
 And so he ceased his tortuous trade to ply  
 Beneath the club of Hercules, and he  
 Of fivescore strokes scarce ten felt consciously."  
 And while he spake, far off did Cacus flee;  
 And spirits, three in number, 'neath us came, 35  
 Whom neither I nor yet my Guide did see,  
 Till "Who are ye?" they loudly did exclaim.  
 And so my Leader ceased his tale to tell,  
 And they sole objects of our heed became.  
 I knew them not, but then it so befell, 40  
 As often follows, should some chance betray,  
 That one was forced the other's name to tell,

<sup>15</sup> See C. xiv. 46 on Capaneus. Vanni would have found himself among the blasphemers had he not been guilty of the baser crime of sacrilege.

<sup>17</sup> The Centaur, half-man, half-beast, is Cacus, whom Virgil (*Æn.* viii. 193) represents as *semihomo*, and whom Dante transforms into a centaur. For Maremma, see note on C. xxix. 47.

<sup>25</sup> We are still in the groove of the poet's classical reminiscences. For the story of Cacus, see *Æn.* viii. 193-270. He appears here as the symbol of combined force and fraud.

<sup>35</sup> The three forms are identified in lines 68, 140, 148, where see notes.

Crying out, "Where can Cianfa then delay?"  
 And thereon I, to make my Guide give heed,  
 My finger betwixt chin and nose did lay. 45  
 If thou art slow to credit, who dost read,  
 What I shall tell, no marvel will it be,  
 For scarce I trust it, though I saw the deed.  
 As I upon them turned mine eyes to see,  
 A serpent with six feet itself did throw 50  
 Straight before one, and bound him utterly;  
 Around his belly its mid-feet did go,  
 And with its front ones it his arms did bind;  
 Then on each cheek its teeth wrought cruel woe;  
 Upon his thighs it stretched the feet behind, 55  
 And 'twixt the two it twisted round its tail,  
 And backward on the reins its folds entwined;  
 Never so close did ivy tree assail  
 With tiny fangs, as that beast horrible  
 Did on the other's limbs its own impale. 60  
 Then, as of hot wax made, they blended well,  
 And each took somewhat of the other's hue;  
 With neither did its former fashion dwell,  
 As from before the flame that scorches through  
 Upon the paper creeps a tint of brown, 65  
 White dead and gone, and yet the black not true.  
 The other two upon the sight looked down,  
 Each crying, "Agnello, what a change is thine!  
 Lo! nor as two nor yet as one thou'rt shown."  
 Already did the two heads so combine, 70  
 When the two faces melted into one,  
 And lost in each was every feature's line.

<sup>43</sup> Cianfa was one of the Donati. Historians narrate no robbery in which he was implicated; commentators expand the text. Dante may have known. Cianfa appears in l. 50 transformed into the six-footed serpent. The gesture of l. 45 implies that he recognised a Florentine name.

<sup>68</sup> The *Anon.* gives a brief account of an Agnolo Brunelleschi of Florence, who first robbed his father and mother, and then used to enter great houses disguised as a beggar and rob them.



Of the four lengths of limb two arms were grown,  
 The thighs and legs, the belly and the trunk,  
 Such limbs became as never yet were known. 75  
 All trace of former features now was sunk;  
 The form transformed, as neither, yet as twain,  
 Appeared, and slowly from our gaze it shrunk.  
 As when a lizard, 'neath the fiery reign  
 O' the dogdays, seeks to change its hedgerow bourne, 80  
 It seems like lightning to dart o'er the plain,  
 So came there then, as to the paunches borne  
 Of the other two, a snake of fiery wrath,  
 Livid and black as any peppercorn,  
 And at that part where first our body hath 85  
 Its nourishment, pierced one of them right through,  
 Then swelling, fell before him on the path.  
 The pierced one gazed, but no speech did ensue,  
 But with fixed feet he gaping face did show,  
 As though or sleep or fever's stroke he knew. 90  
 He on the serpent, it on him did throw  
 Fixed gaze, it from its mouth, he from his wound,  
 Smoked forth, the smoke clouds mingling in their flow.  
 Let Lucan now be silent, where is found  
 How poor Sabellus and Nassidius fell, 95  
 And let him list what from my bow shall sound.

<sup>82</sup> The transformation which now begins is that of the serpents, identified in lines 140 and 151 with Francesco Cavalcanti and Buoso Donati.

<sup>94</sup> The passage referred to describes the death of two soldiers in Cato's army from the bites of two species of serpents (*Lucan*, ix. 769-804). For the transformation of Cadmus and his wife Harmonia into a serpent, see Ovid, *Met.* iv. 563-604, and for that of Arethusa into a fountain, *Met.* v. 572-671. With a feeling which reminds us of Turner's wish that the picture which he looked on as his masterpiece should be hung in the National Gallery, side by side with one of Claude's, Dante boldly challenges comparison with two out of the five great poets of antiquity whom he most revered. He had been content to be sixth in that goodly company (*C.* iv. 102); now he claims his place among the first three. No one will dispute his claim to that high position, but most of us will probably rest that claim on powers, aims, characteristics, which were as unlike as possible to those of Ovid or Lucan, rather than on his successful rivalry with them in the line which each had made his own. What he probably prided himself on was the condensation which compressed into eighty or ninety lines what they would have spread over two or three hundred—the marvellous compli-

Let Ovid cease of Arethuse to tell  
 And Cadmus ; though he change her to a spring,  
 And him to snake, I grudge him not his spell.  
 Two natures face to face he could not bring 100  
 Transmuted thus, so that on either side  
 Forms quickly changed their bodies' fashioning.  
 Each with the other in such manner vied,  
 That the snake parted into twain its tail ;  
 The wounded man's feet were together tied, 105  
 Nor did to legs and thighs like union fail.  
 So that in little time appeared no trace  
 Of juncture, of that change to tell the tale.  
 The cloven tail assumed the shape and space 110  
 The other lost, and that one's skin became  
 Hard, while to this there came a softer grace.  
 I saw the arms drawn up at the armpits' frame,  
 And its two feet, of scanty length before,  
 Were stretched as his to less dimensions came ; 115  
 And the hind-feet, entwisted more and more,  
 Became the member that a man conceals,  
 And the poor wretch for his, two members bore.  
 Then from the smoke o'er this and that one steals  
 New tint, and clothes the one with hair all new,  
 While from the other all the hair it peels. 120  
 As one rose up, the other downward drew,  
 Yet those malignant lamps they laid not by,  
 'Neath which each face into the other grew ;  
 He who stood drew it to the temples high,  
 And out of the excess of substance there 125  
 Came forth the ears where simple cheeks did lie ;

cation of the double reciprocal metamorphosis, the vividness of the similes in l. 64 and 79, drawn as they were from objects that seemed to lie outside the range of conventional poetic imagery ; and in all these he might fairly claim the palm, if such a prize were worth contending for. But we feel also that the poet stoops from his higher level in the very act of competition ; that, after all, what we have is a *tour de force* and nothing more, and there are few passages in the *Commedia* on which we dwell with less delight, or from which we reap less profit.

What drew not back but as before did fare  
 Made for the face from that excess a nose,  
 And bade the lips their proper thickness wear.  
 He who lay flat his features forward throws, 130  
 And both his ears withdraws within his head,  
 Just as the snail doth with the horns he shows;  
 His tongue, once fit the sounds of speech to shed,  
 Single in form, now split, while into one [fled.  
 The forked tongue came, and then the smoke had 135  
 The soul that into bestial shape had grown  
 Sped through the valley, hissing as it went;  
 The other, spitting as it spake, passed on.  
 Then his new shoulders turned he, forward bent,  
 And to the other said, "Let Buoso speed, 140  
 Crawling, like me, along this pit's extent."  
 So that seventh rubbish lot saw I indeed  
 Change and rechange: and if my pen doth stray  
 A little, let the strangeness for me plead.  
 And though upon mine eyes strange wonder lay 145  
 And my mind wandered, yet they could not flee  
 So hidden from me, as they went their way,  
 But I Sciancato Puccio did see,  
 And he alone remained unaltered still  
 Of those who erst came on, companions three; 150  
 The other he whom thou dost weep, Gaville.

<sup>140</sup> Buoso Donati (or, according to some commentators, Abati) is the man who has become a serpent. Nothing more is known of him than is here implied.

<sup>148</sup> Puccio, of the Galigai family of Florence, is said, like the others, to have been guilty of gross official peculations.

<sup>151</sup> The last of the evil company is not named, but the mention of Gaville, a town in the Val d'Arno, where many had been ruined and put to death for their share, real or supposed, in the murder of Francesco Cavalcanti, helped the early commentators to identify him. (*Anon.*)

*The Eighth Bolgia—The Givers of Evil Counsel—Ulysses and  
Diomed—The Last Voyage of Ulysses*

REJOICE, O Florence, since so great thy fame,  
That over sea and land thy wings are spread,  
And through the depths of Hell resounds thy name.  
Five such I found among the scoundrel dead,  
Thy citizens, whence shame my soul doth fill, 5  
Nor do they with much honour crown thy head;  
But if at morning dawn come true dreams still,  
It will be thine in no long time to bear  
What Prato and the rest desire of ill.  
Should it come now, 'twere late by many a year : 10  
Since come it must, I would it now were come,  
Since more 'twill grieve me as life's end draws near.  
So upward by the self-same stairs we clomb  
The rocks had made for our descent before,  
In front my Guide, and I behind did roam ; 15  
And as our lonely way we travelled o'er  
Among the rock's sharp crags and jutting stones,  
Feet without hands had been but scanty store.

<sup>1</sup> The motive of the long list of official robbers is now made clear. It gives the poet an opening for turning on his city with keen incisive irony. She may well rejoice; her fame is spread far and wide, even in Hell. In *Conv.* iv. 27 the same feeling takes the more natural form of lamentation. *Comp. Purg.* vi. 127-151.

<sup>7</sup> *Comp. Purg.* ix. 16 for the same belief, which Dante may have derived from Ovid (*Heroid.* xix. 195)—

*"Namque sub Auroram, jam dormitante lucernâ,  
Somnia quo cerni tempore vera solent."*

<sup>9</sup> Prato is named as a typical representative of the enemies of Florence. The words are, of course, a prophecy after the event, but what special disaster is referred to is matter of conjecture. Such incidents as the faction fights after 1300 (*Vill.* viii. 39), or the fall of the Ponte Carraia in 1304 (*Vill.* viii. 69), or the great fire of June of the same year (*Vill.* viii. 71), may have been in Dante's mind. Possibly the reference may be to the excommunication which the Pope's Legate, the Cardinal di Prato, launched against the citizens of Florence on their refusal to accept his offers of mediation between them and the exiled Bianchi (*Vill.* viii. 69; *Faur.* i. 193). On this hypothesis, the "other" may be Cardinal Orsini, who was sent by Clement V. in 1306, and who also placed the city under an interdict. The thought of l. 12 seems to be that the speaker would rather that the Divine judgment, which he assumes to be inevitable, would fall on the city which

Then grieved I much, and still my spirit groans,  
 When I recall what there my eyes beheld, 20  
 And my free mind a check unwonted owns,  
 That it run not, by Virtue unimpelled ;  
 So that if some good star, or aught more high,  
 Good gifts have given, they be not now withheld.  
 As when the peasant on the hill doth lie, 25  
 (What time his face from us is least concealed  
 Who to the world gives light from out the sky,  
 And swarms of flies to gnats their places yield),  
 And down the vale sees many a glow-worm's rays,  
 There where he plucks his grapes or ploughs his 30  
 field ;  
 So many a flame lit up in glowing blaze  
 In the eighth Bolgia there I soon did see,  
 As soon as I upon its depth did gaze ;  
 And like to him the bears avenged, when he 35  
 Elijah's chariot watched till it was gone,  
 What time the steeds erect to heaven did flee—  
 For with his eyes he failed to track them on,  
 Or see aught else but one encircling flame,  
 That like a cloud its way right upward won—  
 So in the pit's deep gorge each went and came, 40  
 For not one did the deed of theft display,  
 Yet each enwrapped a sinner and his shame.

he still loved, while there was yet hope that he might live to see better days for it, and for himself, than when the infirmities of age would make him less able to hold up against the sorrows which touched both it and him.

<sup>23</sup> For the stellar influence on which Dante loved to dwell, see C. xv. 55, Par. xxii. 110 The "better thing" is the grace of God (C. xxi. 82), perhaps the special consecration of Par. xxiv. 151 (*Faur.* i. 80).

<sup>28</sup> It has been questioned whether the "*luciole*" of the Italians are "glow-worms" or "fire-flies;" ll. 31-42 represent the lights as moving, and this is in favour, at first sight, of the latter; on the other hand, it is said that the fire-fly proper (*Elater noctilucus*) was unknown in Europe till after the discovery of America, and (2) that the glow-worm of Italy (*Lampyrus italica*) shines as it flies as well as when at rest (*Westwood*, i. 248; *Duncan*, pp. 161-172).

<sup>32</sup> The eighth Bolgia is that of the evil counsellors.

<sup>34</sup> Comp. 2 *Kings* ii. 11, 12, 23-25.

Erect upon the bridge I then did stay,  
 So that unless my hands a rock had held,  
 Without being pushed, my feet had given way. 45  
 And when my Guide me thus attent beheld,  
 Thus spake he: "In these fires the spirits dwell,  
 Each to be wrapt by that which burns compelled."  
 "Dear Master mine," I said, "what thou dost tell  
 Makes me more certain, but before I deemed 50  
 That so it was, and sought to ask as well  
 Whom doth that fire hold, where apart have streamed  
 The flames at top, as though from out the pyre  
 That o'er Eteocles and his brother gleamed," 55  
 He answered me, "There tortured in that fire  
 Ulysses is and Diomed, and so  
 They run to vengeance as they ran to ire;  
 And there, within the flame, they wail in woe  
 The ambush of that horse that made the gate,  
 Through which the noble seed of Rome did flow; 60  
 Those arts they mourn which for Achilles' fate  
 Still wet with tears Deïdamia's cheek,  
 And for Palladium wail disconsolate."  
 "If they within those flames have power to speak," 65  
 I said, "O Master, once, yea, twice I pray,  
 And that my prayer may count for thousand seek,  
 Thou wilt not to my waiting here say Nay,  
 Until that hornèd flame hard by us come;  
 Thou see'st my yearnings make me lean that way."

<sup>52</sup> Among the many single fires Dante sees a double one. It reminds him of the description given by his favourite Statius (*Theb.* xii. 429-432) of the two sons of Ædipus, Eteocles and Polynices, who died by each other's hands, and were placed together on the funeral pyre, and then *exundant diviso vertice flammæ*, the hatred of the two brothers manifesting itself even in their death (Diod. Sic. iv. 67; Eurip. *Phæn.* 55-80, 1368-1433).

<sup>55</sup> Ulysses and Diomed are placed together as having been joined in the fraud practised on Rhesus (*Æn.* i. 469) and in the theft of the Palladium (*Æn.* ii. 165), as well as in the device of the Trojan horse.

<sup>62</sup> Achilles, who had married Deïdamia, the daughter of Lycomedes, king of Scyros, was concealed in his court and lived in the disguise of a woman. Ulysses and Diomed discovered his retreat, and persuaded him to come to the help of the Greeks in the Trojan war. Deïdamia died of grief.



And he: "Full many praises well become 70  
 Thy prayer, and I receive it graciously;  
 But take good heed that now thy lips be dumb;  
 Leave speech to me: I have in my mind's eye  
 What thou dost wish, for they perchance might  
 scorn,  
 As they were Greeks, with thy words to comply." 75  
 When that the flame was thither onward borne  
 Where to my Leader seemed fit time and place,  
 I heard these words his flowing speech adorn:  
 "O ye whom, twain, one bright fire doth embrace, 80  
 If while I lived I aught from you could claim,  
 Or if that claim filled great or little space,  
 When in the world I wrote my verse of fame,  
 I pray you move not, but let one relate,  
 Where he, storm-driven, to his death-hour came. 85  
 Of th' ancient flame the horn of highest state,  
 Murmuring, began to waver to and fro,  
 Like that which winds tempestuous agitate;  
 And as its point now here, now there did go,  
 As though it were the tongue with which it spake,  
 It utterance gave to voice which thus did flow: 90  
 "When I from Circe parted, who did make  
 Me hide a year and more Gaeta near,  
 Ere from Æneas it that name did take,  
 Neither my son's sweet presence, nor my fear 95  
 And love for my old father, nor the love  
 Which should have given Penelope good cheer,

<sup>75</sup> The Greek heroes, it is assumed, would look with ill-will on the living Florentines, who claimed to be descended from the Romans, and therefore from the Trojans, with whom they had warred. Virgil, as a Mantuan, was free from that objection, and besides could plead, as in l. 81, what he had done to perpetuate their fame.

<sup>91</sup> The narrative that follows is remarkable as having no counterpart in the Trojan cycle of Greek or Latin writers. Homer makes Ulysses return from the island of Circe to Ithaca, and start afterwards on new voyages (*Od.* x. 210, xi. 119). Here, though a return to Ithaca is not absolutely excluded, the impression left is that he sails westward at once from Gaeta. See *Æn.* vii. 1-4.

Could check the strong desire I had to rove,  
 And so become experienced in mankind,  
 With human vice and virtue hand in glove.  
 On the wide sea I gave me to the wind, 100  
 With one sole bark, and with that company,  
 The few by whom I ne'er was left behind.  
 Both shores as far as Spain then met mine eye,  
 Far as Morocco and Sardinia's isle,  
 And others that on all sides sea-girt lie. 105  
 I and my friends were old and spent with toil,  
 When to that narrow strait we came at last  
 Where Hercules set landmarks on the soil,  
 That they might never more by man be passed;  
 On the right hand I left Seviglia's shore, 110  
 And on the left by Ceuta had sailed past.  
 'O brothers,' then I said, 'who evermore  
 Through thousand toils have journeyed to the  
 West,  
 To this short remnant of your life of yore,  
 Still with the sense of watchful insight blest, 115  
 Deny ye not the great experiment  
 Of worlds unpeopled where the sunsets rest;

104 Beyond Morocco the voyager passed through the Pillars of Hercules, Calpe and Abile, on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar. Ceuta is on the African shore of the Straits.

112 The noble passage that follows has been made familiar to English readers by Tennyson's paraphrase in his *Ulysses*, which, somewhat strangely, appears without any reference to Dante. A comparison with *Æn.* i. 198, Hor. *Od.* I. vii. 25, suggests the thought that, as in the previous canto, Dante had measured his strength against Lucan and Ovid, so now he does not shrink from competing with Horace, and even with his own Master and guide, and, so far as he knew him, with Homer. He feels that his fame also in future ages will be as that of the *poeta sovrano*. In the absence of any traditional foundation for such a history, we may think of Dante as throwing himself into the mind and temper of the ideal geographical explorer, helped possibly by some intercourse with Marco Polo at Venice, or some knowledge of the Franciscan traveller Rubruquis (*d.* after 1293). See Note on C. xxi. 7. We may compare the language of the former, when he addresses himself to "all who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind," and tells them that, since the days of Adam "no man of any nation hath had so much knowledge and experience of the divers parts of the world and its wonders" as he had had (*Yule*, i. 1). Compare also the letters of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella, as breathing the same spirit.

Let your thoughts be on your high lineage bent:  
 Ye were 'not born to live as lives the brute,  
 But to seek good and wisdom's high intent.' 120  
 I made my friends so eager and acute  
 For travel, with that little speech of mine,  
 That no delay thenceforth their mood would suit;  
 And, our stern turned to where the mornings shine,  
 We made our oars as wings for that mad flight, 125  
 Still gaining on the left horizon line:  
 And all the stars I saw that lit the night  
 Of the other pole, our own being sunk so low,  
 It rose not from its ocean bed to sight.  
 Five times was kindled, five times quenched the glow 130  
 By which the moon's inferior face was lit,  
 Since into that deep pass 'twas ours to go,  
 When through the distance dim and dark did flit  
 The vision of a mount that seemed so high  
 I ne'er had looked on any like to it. 135  
 Joyous were we, but soon there came a cry,  
 For from that new land rose a whirlwind blast,  
 And smote the good ship's prow full terribly.  
 Three times amidst the water's whirl it passed,  
 Then on the fourth the stern aloft did rise, 140  
 The prow sank as Another willed; at last  
 The sea's wild waters closed upon our eyes."

126 We have to transport ourselves to the geographical notions of the 13th century. Of the two hemispheres of the earth, one, containing Europe, Asia, and the parts of Africa then known, was thought of as mainly land; the other, unexplored, as covered entirely by the sea, save where the Mountain of Purgatory rises at the antipodes of Jerusalem. Dante assumes that by perpetually steering to the west the voyagers would reach that meridian. On his hypothesis and measurements, the mountain would be 2050 miles from Cadiz, which would give about 13 miles a day for the five months' voyage of l. 130. One asks conjecturally whether the Mount of Purgatory originated in any dim report of the Peak of Teneriffe brought back by adventurous sailors? The only starting-point of the narrative, in all its details absolutely new, is a tradition in Pliny that Ulysses in a second voyage had founded the city of Lisbon. The Canary Islands, of which Teneriffe is one, were known to the ancients as the Fortunate Isles, the Isles of the Blessed (*Plin.* v. 2). The first record of them in modern travel appears in 1330.

*The Eighth Bolgia—The State of Romagna—Guido da  
Montefeltro*

ALREADY was the flame erect and still,  
 Speaking no more and turned from us away,  
 With kindly leave from my sweet Poet's will.  
 Behind it yet another fire did play,  
 And made us turn our eyes to its high flame 6  
 By sounds confused that from it made their way.  
 As that Sicilian bull, whose bellowing came  
 First from his moaning—and that doom was right—  
 Who with his file had modelled out its frame,  
 Bellowed with voice of torment and affright, 10  
 So that, though it was fashioned all of brass,  
 It seemed as if transfixed with sore despite,  
 So, as they had no way nor chink to pass  
 From their source in the flame, the words of woe  
 Took tone and accent as its nature was; 15  
 But after they had travelled from below  
 Up to the point, thus giving it the turn  
 The tongue impressed upon them in their flow,  
 We heard it say, "O thou to whom I yearn  
 To speak, whose speech doth as a Lombard's sound, 20  
 Saying, 'Go thy way; I need not more to learn!'  
 Because I am as somewhat tardy found,  
 Let it not irk thee with me now to speak;  
 Thou see'st it irks not me, though thus fire-bound.

<sup>6</sup> The bull which Perillus made for Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, and of which the artist himself was the first victim (Plin. xxiv. 8).

<sup>14</sup> I have followed the *v. l. nel* instead of *del* fuoco.

<sup>21</sup> The speaker, as seen in l. 67, is Guido da Montefeltro. The starting-point of his address lies in the fact that in the words which he quotes here, as spoken by Virgil to Ulysses, there are two (*issa* and *adizzo*) that are conspicuously of the dialect of Northern Italy. He hears the Lombard speech; he would fain know the last tidings of the cities and men he had left there. The question is passed on to Dante, and gives him the opening he wanted for uttering his thoughts on the political situation at the time when he wrote this Canto: probably, as we have seen in C. xix. 79, 80, about 1314. "Latin" in l. 26 is obviously used in its wider sense as = Italian.

If thou but lately this blind world dost seek, 25  
 Fallen from that sweet Latin land above,  
 Whence I drew all in me that's vile and weak,  
 Tell me if peace or war Romagnuols prove :  
 I from the hills come 'twixt Urbino's town  
 And that high ridge whence Tiber's waters move." <sup>30</sup>  
 I was still listening with my head bent down,  
 When he, my Leader, spoke, and touched my  
 side:  
 "Speak thou, for he too is as Latin known."  
 And I with answer ready-made replied,  
 Beginning then my speech without delay : 35  
 "O soul, who down below thyself dost hide,  
 Romagna never was, nor is this day,  
 Without fierce war within its tyrants' heart ;  
 But none was open when I came away.  
 Ravenna through long years plays unchanged part ; 40  
 The Eagle of Polenta nestles there,  
 And its wide wings o'er Cervia doth dispart.

<sup>29</sup> Montefeltro lay between Urbino and the source of the Tiber in Mount Coronaro.

<sup>33</sup> The words look back to the caution that had been given in C. xxvi. 72. Here the soul was not a Greek, but Dante's fellow countryman.

<sup>37</sup> The province then known as Romagna was bounded on the S. by Pesaro, on the N. by the Panaro and the Po, on the E. by the Adriatic, and on the W. by Tuscany. Ravenna was its capital, and it included also the sub-provinces of Bologna, Forlì, and Ferrara. The name was given (Lat. *Romandiola*=Little Rome, as Byzantium had become the New Rome), when the Exarchs made Ravenna the capital of the Western Empire.

<sup>38</sup> The state of Romagna in 1284 is described in a chronicle of Bologna (*Murat.* xviii. 286) in terms that remind us of those in which Thucydides described the state of Greece during the Peloponnesian War (iii. 82-84). Every city was torn in pieces by Guelph and Ghibelline factions, by local and personal jealousies. Hardly a day passed without a murder, hardly a night without a fire, not from accident.

<sup>41</sup> The eagle of Polenta (his arms were an eagle *gules* on a field *or*) is Guido da Polenta, the father of the Francesca of C. v. He became master of Ravenna after a tumult in 1275; was said to have placed his province under the protection of the Pope; was deposed and expelled in 1296; was again in possession of Ravenna in 1300, but was probably not as yet, when Dante wrote, known to him, as his nephew was afterwards, as a friend and protector (*Scart.*).

<sup>42</sup> Cervia, a seaport twelve miles from Ravenna.

The land which passed through trial long and drear,  
 And laid the French in heaps with bloody sword,  
 Between the green claws doth again appear : 45  
 Verrucchio's mastiff old and new-sprung lord,  
 Who poor Montagna treacherously slew,  
 Have with their teeth, as with an auger, bored.  
 Lamone's city and Santerno's too  
 Are ruled by lion's whelp in argent nest. 50  
 Who between heat and frost takes party new ;  
 And that whose slopes by Savio are caressed,  
 As it lies there between the mount and plain,  
 So midway lives, half-free and half-oppressed.  
 And now, I pray thee, who thou art explain ; 55  
 Be not more stubborn than the rest are found,  
 So may thy name on earth its place maintain."

43 The land is Forlì, and the story runs thus: Pope Martin IV. sent an expedition, consisting mainly of French and Provençal troops, to take possession of Forlì (1282). Guido da Montefeltro (to whose spirit Dante is now speaking) was then in command there. By his counsels, the city gates were left open and the soldiers withdrawn. The French, counting on an easy victory, entered the city, which they looked on as deserted, were taken as in a trap, and massacred.

45 A lion *vert* in a field *or* were the arms of the Ordellaffi, then the lords of Forlì. One of the uncertain Dante traditions is, that he was for a time secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordellaffi.

46 The "mastiff old" (the word may refer either to character or armorial bearings, or both) is Malatesta (*nomen et omen*) of Rimini, the father of the Paolo and Gianciotto of C. v. The "new-sprung lord" is Malatestino, their elder brother, who succeeded his father in 1312. Verrucchio was a castle given by the people of Rimini to Malatesta. Montagna di Parcitade, the head of the Ghibellines, was slain by Malatesta and the Guelphs (*Murat.* xv. 894, 895). The line that follows might almost serve as a motto for the Italian history of the period, as summing up the policy of well-nigh every popular leader, Podestà, Capitano del Popolo, soldier of fortune, whether Guelph or Ghibelline (*Barl.*).

49 Lamone, the river on which Faenza stands; Santerno, that of Imola. The "lion's whelp" describes the armorial bearings of Maghinardo Pagano, who became lord of Imola in 1296 (*Murat.* xiv. 1113). The next line points to the shifting policy of the soldier of fortune, now a Ghibelline, now fighting on the side of the Guelph Florentines at Campaldino in 1289 (*Vill.* vii. 149), and joining Charles of Valois (hence Dante's indignation) on his entry into Florence in 1300.

52 The city on the Savio is Cesena, in whose local situation Dante sees the type of its political. It was conspicuous for its frequent changes of Podestà and its expulsion of suspected nobles (*Murat.* xiv. 1121).



And when the flame had made its wonted sound  
 A little while, its point waved to and fro,  
 And then their way the whispering murmurs wound: <sup>60</sup>  
 "If I had deemed my answer e'er should go  
 To one whose steps should to the world return,  
 This flame would stand, nor further flickering show;  
 But inasmuch as from this dismal bourne  
 No living man returns, if truth I hear, <sup>65</sup>  
 I make my answer with no fear of scorn.  
 I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,  
 Deeming that I, so girt, might make amend;  
 And true enough that deeming might appear,  
 But that the High Priest—evil be his end!— <sup>70</sup>  
 Sent me back yet again to former crime;  
 And how and why I will thou apprehend.  
 While I in bone and flesh yet lived my time  
 In form my mother gave me, every deed <sup>75</sup>  
 Did with the fox-mood, not the lion's, chime.  
 The shifts and byways underground that lead,  
 All these I knew, and so applied each art,  
 The fame thereof made all the world give heed;

<sup>61</sup> The life of Guido da Montefeltro is so conspicuously typical of the time that it may be well to fill up Dante's outlines. Born before 1250, he was made captain of the Romagna Ghibellines in 1274, defeated the Guelphs of Bologna and Malatesta in 1275, and became master of Cesena in 1276; he was Capitano of Forlì, and occupied Romagna against the Pope. In 1286, if not earlier, he was reconciled to the Papacy, but was elected as their general by the Ghibelline Pisans in 1288, and was again excommunicated. He defended Pisa against the Guelphs and restored order and good government there, but after taking Cesena in 1292, was expelled from Pisa in 1294. He was then once more reconciled to the Church and became a Franciscan friar. He died in 1298 and was buried at Assisi (?). Dante speaks of him in *Conv.* iv. 28 as *il nobilissimo nostro Latino* (*Murat.*, *Vill.*, and many chronicles in *Scart.*). The narrative that follows gives the poet's account of the closing events of his life. His son is found in *Purg.* v. 88.

<sup>67</sup> Cordelier, the popular name for a Franciscan friar, from the cord which was the badge of the Order. See C. xvi. 106.

<sup>70</sup> The high priest, *Pontifex Summus*, is Boniface VIII.

<sup>75</sup> The history of Guido would seem to indicate a combination of the fox and lion natures, rather than one exclusively vulpine. A chronicler of Asti (*Murat.* xi. 188) describes him as "*sapientissimus, fortis, largus, et callidissimus in bellando*." One of Pisa, however, relates that when he appeared against the Florentines, they raised the cry, "*Ecco la Volpe*."

And when I knew that I had reached that part  
 Of life when for each single soul 'tis right 80  
 To reef the sails and coil the ropes apart,  
 That which before had pleased now gave despite.  
 Contrite and shriven, I knelt on bended knees,  
 Ah woe is me ! and had found help of might,  
 But that the chief of our new Pharisees, 85  
 At war with foes hard by the Lateran—  
 Not Saracens nor even Jews were these,  
 Those foes of his were Christians, every man,  
 And none to conquer Acre went to fight,  
 Nor trafficked in the land of the Soldan. 90  
 Nor sacred orders nor his post of might  
 Did he regard, nor yet that cord of mine,  
 Which whoso wore grew thinner in men's sight ;  
 But, as Sylvester was by Constantine  
 Called from Soratt', his leprosy to heal, 95  
 So he called me, as skilful to divine,  
 For that proud fever, cure to work his weal :  
 He asked my counsel and I held my peace,  
 For those his words did drunkard's thoughts reveal.

<sup>80</sup> The passage is almost a rhymed paraphrase of *Conv.* iv. 28, in which Dante dwells on the wisdom of using old age as a time for meditation, and points to Lancelot of the Lake, who became a hermit, and Guido da Montefeltro as examples. The facts recorded here may have come to Dante's knowledge after he wrote the *Convito*.

<sup>85</sup> The "new Pharisees" are the *Curia Romana* as it was under Boniface. The term was constantly applied by Frederick II. to the Popes with whom he was in conflict (*Kington*, ii. 137). The "foes" were the house of Colonna, whose possessions were near the Lateran. Boniface quarrelled with them about a treasure which they were accused of appropriating, deposed the Cardinals who belonged to their family, laid waste their palaces, and issued a bull against them (*Murat*. xviii. 301 ; *Vill.* viii. 21 ; *Scart.*).

<sup>89</sup> Acre, the last possession of the Christians in Palestine, fell into the hands of the Saracens in 1291. The Colonnas were to be the objects of the next crusade.

<sup>92</sup> The "cord," which was, in idea at least, the badge of poverty and abstinence. *C.* xvi. 106 ; *Par.* xi. 87, xii. 132.

<sup>94</sup> The story of the donation of Constantine is told as it passed current in the 13th century, as Dante found it in his master's *Tesoro* (ii. 25). Constantine, like another Naaman, came to Sylvester, then in retirement at Soracte, now Sant' Oreste, to be healed of leprosy ; was healed in the waters of baptism, and then assigned the States of the Church to the Bishops of Rome in perpetuity. *Comp.* C. xix. 115.

Then he, 'Let not thine heart be ill at ease; 100  
 I from all sin absolve thee; teach thou me  
 How Palestrina from the earth may cease;  
 I, as thou know'st, have power to ope for thee,  
 Or close, Heaven's gates, wherefore the keys are twain,  
 Which he held cheap who here preceded me.' 105  
 His weighty reasonings then did me constrain,  
 There where it seemed worst counsel to be dumb,  
 And I said, 'Since, O Father, every stain  
 Thou dost wash off that on me now must come,  
 Promise profuse, fulfilment scant and late, 110  
 Will make thee triumph in thy lofty home.'  
 Then Francis came, when I had passed death's gate,  
 For me; but one of those swarth cherubin  
 Said, 'Take him not; defraud not my estate;  
 Down 'mong my varlets he must needs come in, 115  
 Because he gave the counsel fraudulent,  
 For which till now I at his hair have been;  
 There is no pardon for the impenitent,  
 And penitence goes not with evil will;  
 Things thus opposed may not by us be blent.' 120

<sup>101</sup> The words imply (1) that the claim to absolve by anticipation was not unknown; (2) that Dante as a theologian rejected it as untenable and contrary to the faith.

<sup>102</sup> Penestrino (= Palestrina) was a stronghold of the Colonnas. As told by *Vill.* viii. 23, the story runs that Boniface invited them to Rieti, and on their submission freed them from excommunication and promised to restore them to their possessions. In the meantime, while they were off their guard, he took and destroyed the fortress of Palestrina on the hill, and built a new town, Civita Papale, on the plain. And this, Villani says, was by the advice of Guido da Montefeltro, who spoke in the very words of l. 110, "*Plurima eis pollicemini; pauca observate.*"

<sup>112</sup> It was the belief of those of whom Milton speaks, who—

"Dying, put on the weeds of Dominic,  
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised,"

that they were at the hour of death taken under the protection of the patron saint of the Order; that his cord drew them from the pit of Hell. The phrase "swarth cherubin" implies the theory that some of each grade of the heavenly hierarchy had taken their part in the great rebellion, and that therefore there were Cherubin and Seraphin, Principalities and Powers, in Hell. *Eph.* vi. 12 would obviously lend a colour to such a belief.

<sup>118</sup> The accusing angel reasons as Aquinas reasons (*Summ.* iii. *qu.* 86, *art.* 2). Absolution assumes penitence. There can be no penitence for a

Ah me ! what anguish through my soul did thrill  
 When he had seized me, saying, 'Thou, may be,  
 Deem'dst not that I could boast logician's skill?'  
 So he to Minos brought me, and then he  
 Eight times around his strong back curled his tail <sup>125</sup>  
 And bit it in his wrath's ferocity,  
 And said, 'With sinners of the fiery veil  
 He goes.' And so I'm lost in this drear seat,  
 And in this garb I tell my sorrow's tale."  
 And when he thus had made his speech complete, <sup>180</sup>  
 The flame departed, moaning yet once more,  
 Its sharp horn writhing in vibrations fleet.  
 My Leader then and I passed on before,  
 Up o'er the rock another arch above,  
 Which hides the fosse where they pay forfeit sore <sup>135</sup>  
 Who, sowing discord, heavy-burdened move.

*The Ninth Bolgia—The Schismatics—Mahomet, Ali, Bertrand  
 de Born, and Others*

Who with free speech unrhymed could utter well  
 And fully all the blood and many a wound  
 Which now I saw, though oft the tale he tell?  
 Each tongue, I trow, too feeble would be found,  
 By reason that our speech and mental sight <sup>5</sup>  
 For such great themes have far too small a bound.

sin when the man intends to commit it. Absolution by anticipation is, therefore, a contradiction in terms.

<sup>125</sup> The act as thus described placed the offender in the eighth circle, among the evil counsellors. Not even St. Francis could save him from that condemnation.

<sup>1</sup> The pilgrims enter on the ninth Bolgia, that of the authors of schism.

<sup>4</sup> An obvious reproduction of *Æn.* vi. 624-627.

<sup>10</sup> A *v. l.* gives "Romans," but it was quite after Dante's manner to describe them by the name of the older race, on whom he looked as the

If all the host should once again unite  
 Which of old time upon the fateful land  
 Of Puglia mourned the bloodshed of the fight,  
 Caused by long war and by the Roman's hand, 10  
 When of the rings were made such high-heaped spoil,  
 As Livy writes, whose words unerring stand,  
 With that which felt the pain of blows erewhile,  
 'Gainst Robert Guiscard in hot warfare set,  
 And that whose bones are gathered in the soil 15  
 Of Ceperan, where each Apulian met  
 A traitor proved ; at Tagliacozzo too,  
 Where old Alardo, unarmed, conquered yet ;  
 If some with limbs lopped off, and some pierced through,  
 Should show, they would no parallel provide 20  
 To that ninth Bolgia's fashion, foul to view.  
 A cask that loses centre board or side  
 Was never so pierced through as I saw one  
 Rent from chin down to where hind-parts divide ;  
 Between his legs his entrails all hung down, 25  
 His heart's recess and that foul sack lay bare,  
 Where what we eat as excrement is thrown.  
 And while on him with fixed eyes I stare,  
 He looked at me, and with his hands his breast  
 Oped wide, and said, "See how myself I tear ; 30

founders of Rome. The reference is (1) to the Samnite wars, of which Apulia was the chief scene ; (2) to the slaughter of Cannæ, after which Hannibal sent to Carthage three bushels of rings taken from the corpses of the slain (*Liv.* xxiii. 12). Dante refers again to the fact in *Conv.* iv. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Guiscard, son of Tancred de Hauteville of Normandy, who defeated the Papal and Imperial forces at the battle of Civitella, the Hastings of Italy, and was afterwards recognised by the Pope as Duke of Apulia (*Kington*, i. 15 ; *Vill.* iv. 18, 19).

<sup>16</sup> Ceperano was the scene of a battle (which Dante seems to mix up with the greater battle of Benevento) between Manfred and Charles of Anjou, in which the former was defeated and slain. The Apulians for the most part fled (*Vill.* vii. 5-9 ; *Murat.* xi. 158).

<sup>17</sup> Tagliacozzo, a castle in the Abruzzi, where in 1268 the young Conradin was defeated by Charles of Anjou. Alardo di Valleri was one of Charles's French generals, by whose wise strategy rather than mere force of arms the victory was gained (*Vill.* vii. 26, 27).

<sup>24</sup> The horrible description seems in parts an echo of *Lucan* ix. 773. I have euphemised the over-bold plainness of the original.

See how Mahomet maimed is manifest.

Before me Ali goes and wails aloud,  
Sharp cloven from the chin to forelock's crest,  
And all the rest of whom thou see'st the crowd  
Were sources in their lifetime of offence  
And schism ; therefore mangled are they bowed.

35

A devil stands behind, of cunning fence,  
Who with sharp blows and stroke of sharpest sword  
Tortures each soul of all this pack immense :

When we have travelled o'er that road abhorred,  
Because our wounds are closed again, each one,  
Ere pass before him any of our horde.

40

But who art thou who from the crag look'st on,  
Seeking perchance thy torment to delay  
Which is adjudged thee for thy ill deeds done ? "

45

"Not dead is he, nor guilt leads him this way,"  
My Master said, "that he should tortured be ;  
But that he may experience full assay,

I, who am dead, must lead by Heaven's decree,  
And guide him through all Hell from round to round ;  
And this is true just as I tell it thee."

50

More than a hundred, when they heard that sound,  
Stopped in the fosse and turned to look on me,  
Forgetting, in their wonder, each his wound.

"To Fra Dolcino say thou this, that he  
(Thou who perchance wilt soon see daylight's glow),  
Unless to join me here he willing be,

55

<sup>31</sup> The standpoint from which Dante looks on Mahomet, not as the founder of a new religion, but as the author of a schism, like that of the Novatianists or the Donatists, is singularly characteristic of mediæval thought. In the form of punishment he seems to have had in his mind the literal meaning of the word. The author of division is himself divided. The special form of Ali's doom, in which the face, which in Mahomet was left whole, is cloven from brow to chin, indicates apparently his position as the author of a new schism among the followers of the false prophet.

<sup>34</sup> A list of those whom Dante had in his mind would be an instructive commentary, from his standpoint, on Church history ; but we must acquiesce in his reticence.

<sup>55</sup> In the mention of Fra Dolcino we have a partial glimpse into what such a commentary would have been. All that we know of him comes from his



Should store himself with food, lest piled-up snow  
 Should to the Novarese bring victory,  
 Which else to gain were no light task, I trow." 60  
 So, with one foot for turning lifted high,  
 Spake Mahomet to me the words I write ;  
 Then on the ground he laid it to pass by.  
 Another, with his throat pierced through outright,  
 And his nose lopped from just below the eyes, 65  
 And but one ear remaining, at the sight  
 Stopped with the rest to gaze in sheer surprise,  
 And then before those others oped his throat,  
 Which all without was stained in blood-red guise,  
 And said, "O thou, who bear'st of guilt no note, 70  
 Whom I of old in Latin land have seen,  
 If too great likeness tend not to promote  
 Deceit, remember Pier of Medicine,  
 If e'er thou turn'st to see the pleasant plain  
 Which doth from Vercell' to Marcabo lean, 75  
 And say to Fano's best and worthiest twain,  
 As Guido and as Angiolello known,  
 That, if our gift of foresight be not vain,

enemies and judges, and their story is sufficiently black. He appears as a member of an Order of "Apostolic Brothers," founded by Gerard Sagarelli of Parma in 1260. He was said to proclaim that the Church of Rome was the great harlot of the Apocalypse, and to have taught the community of goods and women, and frightful stories were told of his personal licentiousness. He had about 1400 followers, chiefly in Northern Italy. Clement V. proclaimed a crusade against him, and he was besieged in a mountain stronghold near Vercelli by an army of which Novara furnished the largest contingent. The fort was taken in March 1307, a heavy fall of snow having deprived the besieged of all provisions from without, and after three months in prison he and many of his followers were burnt alive at Novara (*Murat.* ix. in *Scart.* 431-460; *Milman, L. C.* vii. 355-368). See Mariotti (*i.e.*, Gallenga, *Fra Dolcino*, for a full history of the man and of his times.

73 Pier de' Cattani of Medicina, near Bologna, was notable as having sown discords among the cities and lords of the Romagna, specially between Guido da Polenta (see note on C. xxvii. 41) of Ravenna and Malatestino of Rimini, carrying to each evil reports against the other. The man must have been well known to Dante in his later years (*Anon. Fior.* in *Scart.*).

75 The description includes the great plain of Lombardy, from Vercelli in the N.W. to Marcabò, a fortress in the territory of Ravenna, near the mouth of the Po.

77 Guido del Cassero and Angiolello of Cagnano were two of the leading

They from their ship shall overboard be thrown,  
 Drowned near Cattolica, in no long while, 80  
 Through crime of one as fellest tyrant known.  
 Between Majolica and Cyprus isle  
 Neptune ne'er saw a crime so great as this  
 Wrought by fierce pirates or by Argive guile.  
 That traitor who one orb of sight doth miss, 85  
 And holds the land which one who is with me  
 Would fain had never fed those eyes of his,  
 Will bid them come to speech of amity,  
 And then so act that 'gainst Focara's wind  
 They will not need or prayer or piteous cry." 90  
 And I to him: "Speak out and tell thy mind.  
 If 'tis thy will that I of thee should speak,  
 Who is it would that sight so bitter find?"  
 Then did he lay his hand upon the cheek  
 Of one of those his mates and oped his jaw, 95  
 Crying, "This is he; he cannot silence break.

men of Fano, a city on the Adriatic, about thirty miles from Rimini. Malatestino, lord of the latter city (see note on C. xxvii. 46), wishing to obtain possession of Fano, invited them to meet him at Cattolica, on the Adriatic coast, and ordered the sailors of the ship by which they came to throw them into the sea (*Anon. Fior. in Scart.*). The deed filled all Romagna with the horror which the next line expresses.

<sup>82</sup> Cyprus, as the most eastern, Majorca, as the most western, of the islands in the Mediterranean.

<sup>84</sup> "Argive" is probably used for the Greek corsairs who infested the Adriatic Gulf.

<sup>85</sup> Malatestino was commonly known as the "man with the eye," having lost one. He was, it will be remembered, the half-brother of Gianciotto and Paolo, and also of Pandolfo, the best of the family. The Counts of Ghiarzola were descended from Paolo (*Murat. xv. 896, in Scart.*).

<sup>89</sup> The wind of Focara, a mountain near Cattolica, was proverbially dangerous to sailors in that region. Sailors used to pray that "God would keep them from that wind." The victims of Malatesta's fraud would neither need nor profit by such prayers.

<sup>96</sup> The special form of mutilation from which Curio (l. 102) suffered was that his tongue was split. The advice which he gave Cæsar is found in two memorable lines of Dante's favourite Lucan (i. 280):

*"Dum trepidant nullo firmata robore partes,  
 Tolle moras; semper nocuit differre paratis."*

Commentators, so far as I know, have not noticed how closely the preceding lines must have connected themselves, except perhaps in the "*volentes*," with Dante's fortunes. "We," Curio, "*audax venali lingua*," says to Cæsar before he crossed the Rubicon—"pellimur e patriis laribus, pati-

He, when in exile, crushed the doubting awe  
 Of Cæsar, saying that it breeds but ill  
 When one forearmed delays the sword to draw." 100  
 Ah me! what terror seemed his soul to fill,  
 With tongue in throat thus slit and voiceless left,  
 That Curio, once so bold of speech and will.  
 And one of hands both left and right bereft,  
 Lifting the stumps up in the murky air,  
 So that the blood his face all filthy left, 105  
 Cried, "Mosca too thou shalt in memory bear,"  
 Who cried (Ah me!), 'A deed done, there's an  
 end!'  
 Ill seed for all whom Tuscan land doth rear."  
 "And death to all thy race," did I append.  
 Then he, with sorrow heaped on sorrow high, 110  
 Passed on, as one whose griefs to madness tend.  
 But I remained to watch that company,  
 And saw a thing which well might make me dread  
 To tell it without proof of verity,  
 But that my conscience stands me in good stead, 115  
 Companion good, that makes a man full bold,  
 By breastplate of pure heart encompassèd.

*murque volentes exilium.*" Advice, like Curio's, from the fierce Ghibelline associates with whom his own exile brought him into contact, may often have presented itself as a temptation against which Dante had to fight by representing to himself the ultimate outcome of such words for the speaker and those who followed his counsels.

<sup>106</sup> The story of Mosca de' Lamberti carries us back to the Buondelmonte tragedy in which Dante saw the beginning of evils for himself and his city. A young member of that family in 1215 was betrothed to a maiden of the house of the Amidei. He was faithless to his promise, and married instead the daughter of one of the Donati. The Amidei and all their friends met to concert measures of revenge. Various plans were proposed, but Mosca clenched the matter with the words, "*Cosa fatta capo ha.*" And so on Easter morning, as Buondelmonte was riding near the Ponte Vecchio, he was assassinated by the Uberti, Amidei, Lamberti, and others. Here also we note the protest of the high-souled exile against the most popular of the maxims of the Italian *vendetta*.

<sup>115</sup> The words are possibly more than a mere attestation to clothe a poetic fiction, after the manner of the *Arabian Nights* or *Robinson Crusoe*, with an air of verisimilitude. Dante's conscience is so clear from the guilt of giving false and treacherous counsels that he has courage to describe its penalty, however horrible.

I then beheld, and still seem to behold,  
     A trunk without a head pass on before,  
     As passed the others of that mournful fold, 120  
 And by the locks its head, lopped off, it bore,  
     Hung in the hand, in fashion lantern-wise,  
     And "Ah me!" muttering, gazed with looks full  
         sore,  
 And for itself itself a lamp supplies;  
     And they were two in one and one in two: 125  
     How it could be He knows who doth devise.  
 And when towards the bridge's foot it drew,  
     To bring its words more near, with head in hand,  
     His arms he lifted up, full in our view,  
 And said, "The pain thou now canst understand, 130  
     Who, breathing life, art come the dead to see;  
     See if aught great as this thou e'er hast scanned;  
 And that thou may'st true news report of me,  
     Know thou my name, Bertram dal Bornio,  
     Who John, the king, misled to treachery; 135  
 The son and sire I made as foe to foe,  
     E'en as Ahithophel made Absalom  
     And David, by his counsels fraught with woe.  
 Because I severed ties of kin and home,  
     I bear, ah me! my own skull severed here 140  
     From its true stock, which doth in this trunk come:  
 Measure for measure is in me seen clear."

<sup>134</sup> Bertram dal Bornio, Viscount of Altaforte, in Gascony (C. xxix. 29), was conspicuous as warrior, statesman, troubadour (*V. E.* ii. 2). He instigated Prince Henry, the eldest son of Henry II., to rebel against his father. On the Prince's death in 1183, the king besieged and took Altaforte, but pardoned Bertram. After this he stirred up a rebellion against Alphonso II. of Arragon, took part in the war between Richard I. and Philip Augustus, and finally died a Cistercian monk.

<sup>135</sup> The readings vary between *re giovane* ("the young king") and "*Giovanni*." Historically the former is correct, but MSS. and early commentators support the latter. Dante's knowledge of the facts may have been as vague as that of his interpreters. On the whole, it seems probable that *giovane* was a correction for the sake of accuracy. (See *Bart.*, *Scart.*, and *Arrio.* 44).

<sup>137</sup> See 2 *Sam.* xv. 12, xvi. 15, xvii.

*The Tenth Bolgia—The Alchemists—Griffolino of Arezzo—  
Capocchio*

THAT numerous people and their diverse woes  
 So made mine eyes, as drunk with grief, o'er-wrought,  
 That they would fain have found in tears repose;  
 But Virgil said, "Why gaze in eager thought?  
 Why doth thy glance so fixedly abide 5  
 Down there among those maimed shades sorrow-  
 I' the other pits thus hast thou never pried. [fraught?  
 Think, if thou deem'st thou canst the shadows count,  
 For miles a score and two the vale winds wide,  
 And now our feet above the moon do mount; 10  
 Brief is the season now to us allowed,  
 And the unseen exceeds the seen's amount."  
 "If thou hadst given," then answered I aloud,  
 "Due heed unto the cause that made me gaze,  
 Thou this my lingering hadst perchance allowed." 15  
 My Leader then passed on, and in his ways  
 I followed, even as I answer made,  
 And added, "In that den whereon I gaze  
 With eager look, in durance sad is laid  
 A spirit of my blood, that weeps and wails 20  
 The guilt for which such heavy fine is paid."  
 Then said my Guide, "Take heed no thought assail  
 Thy mind to bend it there where he doth dwell;  
 Elsewhere look thou; let him to move thee fail;

<sup>1</sup> The absorbed contemplation falls in with what has been said above as to the thoughts which passed through the poet's mind as he compared the authors of divisions in the past with those among whom his own lot was cast.

<sup>9</sup> The one instance of a definite measurement in the *Inferno*. If this was the size of the ninth Bolgia, those above it and the higher circles must have been much larger. Another of eleven miles appears in C. xxx. 26. The Rossetti school of interpreters make much of the fact that the former was said to be the circuit of the territory (*Faz.* ii. 31), the latter of the walls, of Rome.

<sup>10</sup> The description, looking to the fact of its being full moon (C. xx. 127), indicates *circa* 1 P.M. The journey had been begun the previous evening, and was to be completed within twenty-four hours, so that there remained only about five hours (C. xxxiv. 68).

For at the bridge's foot I saw him well, 25  
 Pointing at thee with finger threatening,  
 And heard his name pronounced Geri del Bell'.  
 Then, so absorbed in seeking to descry  
 His fate who Altaforte once possessed,  
 Thou saw'st him not; so he away did fly." 30  
 "O Leader mine," so him I then addressed,  
 "That bloody death, which hath no vengeance found  
 From any by the self-same wrong oppressed,  
 Made him thus wrathful: hence he turned him  
 round,  
 So deem I, and would speak no word to me, 35  
 And this hath made my pity more abound."  
 So spake we, far as the first place whence we  
 Could from the crag look o'er the other vale,  
 And, had we more light, to its bottom see.  
 When we had gained the farthest cloister's pale 40  
 Of Malebolge, and its brotherhood  
 Before our gaze their aspect could unveil,  
 Laments pierced through mine ears of divers mood,  
 Like arrows with their sharp points tipt with woe;  
 So with my hands upon mine ears I stood. 45  
 What pain would be if to one pit did flow  
 The ills that in Valdicchian's spitals be,  
 As July and September come and go,  
 Or what Maremma and Sardinia see,  
 So was it there; such stench rose evermore 50  
 As comes from limbs that rot in misery.

<sup>25</sup> Geri del Bello belonged to the family of the Alighieri, and was first cousin to the poet's father (Litta. *Art. Alighieri*). He was in ill repute, as having stirred up strife among the family of the Gemini (?) or the Sacchetti (?). Finally, those whom he had sought to divide united against him and put him to death. The menacing gesture is explained in l. 32, which is, in fact, Dante's *apologia* for not having taken up what would by others have been thought a sufficient cause for an hereditary *vendetta*.

<sup>41</sup> The last Bolgia is that of the forgers, coiners, and the like.

<sup>47</sup> The Valdicchiana lies between Arezzo, Cortona, Chiusi, and Montepulciano. The Chiana, which flowed through it, made it marshy and malarious. For the Maremma, see C. xxv. 19; *Purg.* v. 134. Sardinia has at all times



We wound our way adown the farther shore  
 From the long crag, but on the left hand still,  
 And now with clearer vision looked I o'er,  
 Towards the pit where she who works the will 55  
 Of our high Lord, unerring Righteousness,  
 Doth scourge the forgers who her record fill.  
 I cannot think that that was worse distress  
 Which touched the sick of all Ægina's race,  
 When all the air was filled with noisomeness, 60  
 So that all living creatures died apace,  
 E'en to the worm, and then each ancient clan  
 (So do the poets the old story trace)  
 From seed of ants a new-born brood began,  
 Than what we here beheld, in that dim vale, 65  
 Where souls in diverse heaps, lie pale and wan.  
 This on the belly, that on back did trail,  
 Each of the other; some on all-fours crept,  
 And made their way along the gloomy dale.  
 Speechless and pacing slow we onwards stept, 70  
 Gazing, and listening to that suffering crew,  
 Who power to raise their forms no longer kept;  
 There leaning on each other I saw two,  
 As plate on plate doth lean when set to heat,  
 O'er whom from head to foot a foul scab grew, 75  
 And never saw I currycomb so fleet  
 Of stable-boy whose master for him stays,  
 Or one who fain would to his bed retreat,  
 As each of them his nails' sharp bite always  
 Passed o'er his limbs for that exceeding sore 80  
 Of leprous itch that nothing else allays ;

stood low in the health scale. The hot summer months were of course, then, as now, the most fatal period in such regions. Had Dante, as a student of medicine, visited the hospitals? See C. xxx. 53.

<sup>59</sup> The description is drawn from Ovid (*Met.* vii. 523-660). Juno sends a pestilence on Ægina, and the king, Æacus, is the only survivor. He prays to Zeus to fill his lands again with inhabitants as numerous as those of an anthill at his feet, and the ants are changed into men, who thence take the name of Myrmidons (Greek *myrmex*=ant).

And so their nails that scab rubbed evermore,  
 As doth the knife the scales of scarda scrape,  
 Or other fish, with largest covered o'er.  
 "O thou who with thy fingers peel'st thy shape," 85  
 Began to one of them my Leader true,  
 "And, as with pincers, mak'st thy flesh to gape,  
 Tell me if any Latin with this crew  
 His dwelling hath? so may thy nails suffice  
 Through endless time their taskwork to renew!" 90  
 "Latins are we, whom, worn with agonies,  
 Thou see'st thus tortured," weeping answered one;  
 "But who art thou who ask'st for our replies?"  
 Then spake my Guide: "My course doth onward run  
 With this man, yet alive, down steep rocks sheer; 95  
 Not till I've shown him Hell is my task done."  
 Then did they cease this one on that to bear,  
 And each one, all a-tremble, turned to me,  
 With others who the echoing sound did hear.  
 Then my good Master turned my face to see, 100  
 And said, "Tell them what thou dost care to say."  
 And I began, since he so bade it be:  
 "So may your memory never steal away  
 From human minds in that first world up there,  
 But still in life through many a long year stay! 105  
 Say who ye are, and whence your race and where;  
 Let not your foul and miserable plight  
 Make you afraid before me to appear."  
 "I of Arezzo am: Siena's knight,  
 Alberto," said one, "sent me to the stake; 110  
 What brought me here is other matter quite.

83 The *scarda* is a fresh-water fish, identified as the *Cyprinus latus*, conspicuous for its big scales, probably a carp.

109 The Aretine is identified as a Maestro Griffolino, a charlatan of the Cagliostro type. He came to Siena and promised Albert or Albero, the natural or adopted son of the Bishop of that city, that he would teach him to fly, and so help him in his love adventures. When he failed to keep his promise, Albert complained to the Bishop, who accused Griffolino of being involved in the heresy of the Patarini (one of the wild half-Gnostic,

'Tis true to him, in mirthful jest I spake,  
 I knew the secret through the air to fly,  
 And he, o'er-curious, senses scarce awake,  
 Wished me to show the art ; and when that I 115  
 No Dædalus made him, he made me burn  
 By one who did as with a son comply ;  
 But to this Bolgia in its tenth last turn  
 Minos condemned me, he who cannot err,  
 For all that I as alchemy did learn." 120  
 Then said I to the poet, " Was there e'er  
 Like to Siena's, race so vain and weak ?  
 E'en from the French the palm they surely bear."  
 And when the other leper heard me speak  
 He answered, " Well, save Stricca ; he is one 125  
 Whose moderate living ne'er its bounds did break,  
 And Niccol', who the inventor's honours won,  
 For his new skill in clove's luxurious use,  
 In that wide garden where such seed is grown ;  
 Save, too, the band on whom, with hand profuse, 130  
 Caccia d'Ascian squandered wood and vine,  
 And he, the dazed one, lavished e'en his Muse.

half-communistic sects of the 13th century) and had him burnt. His place in the tenth Bolgia, however, was not due to that sin, but to the deeper guilt of alchemy, in which Dante saw an attempt to violate the laws of God for the sake of man's greed (*Scart.*).

<sup>123</sup> We note the dexterity with which the poet combines his two antipathies. His dislike of the French may have started either from his residence at Paris, probably between 1284 and 1288 (*Weg.* p. 96), or his contact with Charles of Valois and his followers.

<sup>125</sup> The exceptions are, of course, as in C. xxi. 41, emphatically ironical. Little is known individually of those who are here named. What had disgusted Dante was the sumptuous luxury of the Siennese nobles, of whom the Salimbeni and the Bonsignori were the most conspicuous. The new use of the clove (the tradition, unless it is an invention of the commentators, was that he had sown the clove in contact with other seeds, and that the plants had thereby gained a more delicate flavour) seems to have stirred the scorn of a man who was habitually abstemious. Probably the "garden" stands for Siena itself, which was fertile in such refinements of luxury.

<sup>130</sup> The "band" (*brigata*) was a Siennese club, the members of which built a splendid palace, where they fared sumptuously every day, and exercised a stately hospitality towards illustrious visitors. Unhappily their finances were exhausted in ten months, and the club collapsed, not without epigrams as epitaphs. Caccia of Ascian, of the house of Scialenghi, was one of the

But that thou know who doth with thee combine  
 Against the Sienese, thy glance turn here,  
 So that my face may answer well to thine ;  
 Then as Capocchio's shade shall I appear,  
 Who wrought false metals by my alchemy.  
 Thou must remember, if I see thee clear,  
 How I aped nature all too skilfully."

135

## CANTO XXX

*The Tenth Bolgia—The Workers of Lies—Adam of Brescia—  
 Sinon of Troy*

WHEN Juno was enraged, in time of old,  
 With those of Thebes because of Semele,  
 As she had shown in fashion manifold,  
 So far strayed Athamas from sanity,  
 That as he saw his wife, with children twain  
 On either hand encumbered, thus cried he :  
 "Come, let us spread our nets, that we may gain  
 As prey the lion-whelps and lioness."  
 Then seizing one, Learchus, might and main,

5

members of the club. The "dazed one" (Dante seems to take the proper name, *Abbagliato*, as descriptive) is said by some to have belonged to the house of Folcacchieri, probably because that name was common in it; others, however, identify him with Folgore di S. Gemignano, the poet of the club, who wrote verses in honour of Niccolo as its founder. He was not wealthy, and was admitted only as an amusing man of letters, a "good diner-out." Hence the point of the contrast between him and the others. They wasted their money; he his wits (*Scart.*).

<sup>136</sup> The archives of Siena record the execution of Capocchio in 1293. The *Anon. Fior.* reports that he excelled in every kind of imitation, both of persons and things, and finally took to alchemy. Line 138 implies that Dante had known him in the flesh, perhaps had for a time joined in his experiments.

<sup>1</sup> See Ovid, *Met.* iii. 253-315, iv. 416-562. The story runs thus: Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, was beloved by Jupiter, and Juno swore vengeance against her and her house, persuaded her to ask Jupiter to appear to her in his glory, so that she perished in her fear and wonder, and sent calamities on the other children of Cadmus. At her bidding the Erinnyes brought madness on Athamas, king of Thebes, so that he took his wife Ino for a lioness, and

He grasped him in his clutches pitiless, 10  
 And whirled and dashed him down upon a stone,  
 And she the other drowned in her distress,  
 Herself too with him ; and when, all o'erthrown,  
 Was seen the pride of Trojans bold to dare,  
 So that the kingdom with its king was gone, 15  
 Then Hecuba, a captive, worn with care,  
 When she her own Polyxena saw dead,  
 And with the corpse of Polydorus there  
 On ocean's shore she met, and reason fled,  
 Wailing and sad, like dog she barked and bayed, 20  
 So far her mind by woe astray was led.  
 But not at Thebes or Troy the Furies made  
 Assault so fierce on any mortal wight,  
 Nor beasts—and much less men—so sorely frayed,  
 As I saw two pale shades in naked plight, 25  
 Who biting did their onward course pursue,  
 As doth the boar who from the sty takes flight.  
 One seized Capocchio, and his teeth thrust through  
 His neck i' the nape, and dragged him down away,  
 And on the rocky ground his belly drew ; 30  
 And the Aretine, who trembling still did stay,  
 Said, " Lo ! Gian Schicchi is that madman there,  
 And frenzied thus makes other souls his prey."

his sons for her whelps, and then (*Met.* iv. 512-520) comes the passage which Dante paraphrases.

<sup>16</sup> Another reminiscence of Ovid (*Met.* xiii. 399-575), who paints the madness of Hecuba, the wife of Priam, wandering among the graves of her children after the fall of Troy, maddened with her many sorrows, herself a prisoner, her daughter Polyxena sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles (*Met.* xiii. 441-480), and Polydorus treacherously slain in Thrace, by his guardian Polymnestor (*Met.* xiii. 527-569 ; *Æn.* iii. 49-68).

<sup>25</sup> The two forms that have brought these pictures of madness to his memory are Gianni Schicchi (l. 32) and Myrrha (l. 37), the guilt of personation being common to them both.

<sup>31</sup> The Aretine is the Griffolino of C. xxix. 109.

<sup>32</sup> Gianni Schicchi belonged to the family of the Cavalcanti. The story, as told by the *Anon. Fior.*, was that Buoso Donati (C. xxv. 140) died without making a will ; that his son or grandson, Simon, knowing Schicchi's power of personation, called him into his counsels, and that the latter, placed in the dead man's bed, dictated a will with many legacies to himself, leaving Simon

Then said I, "So may not that other tear  
 Thee with his teeth, grudge not, I thee entreat, 35  
 To say who 'tis before it disappear."  
 And he: "The ancient spirit thou dost meet  
 Of that accursed Myrrha, who became  
 Enamoured of her sire in ways unmeet;  
 She to the deed of evil with him came 40  
 In likeness of another's form disguised,  
 E'en as that other yonder played his game  
 To win the lady of the stud so prized,  
 Buoso Donati's form assumed, and gave  
 To his last will its sanction legalised." 45  
 And when the two had passed who thus did rave,  
 On whom I fixed mine eye with gaze intent,  
 To other ill-starred souls my glance did wave;  
 I looked on one in form lute-fashion bent,  
 Had he but had his carcase lopped off there 50  
 Whence from the groin the forkèd limbs are  
 sent;  
 The dropsy, that so gives unequal share  
 Of ill-tempered moisture to each part,  
 That face and belly ill assorted are,  
 Constrained him so to keep his lips apart, 55  
 As doth the fevered man who, thirst-oppressed,  
 One towards the chin, and one above doth part.  
 "O ye who tread this world of ours unblest,  
 Though why I know not, free from penalty,"  
 Said he to us, "give heed to my request, 60

as residuary legatee, to a notary who was summoned for the purpose before the death was known.

<sup>38</sup> The story of Myrrha, the daughter of Cinyras, king of Cyprus, which was after the pattern of that of Lot's daughters, is told by Ovid (*Met.* x. 298-502). Adonis, the beloved of Venus, was the offspring of the incestuous union. In his epistle to Henry VII., Dante compares Florence, in her throwing herself into the Pope's arms, to the incestuous Myrrha.

<sup>58</sup> The speaker is supposed to have heard the words spoken by Virgil to Griffolino (C. xxix. 94).



And look on Master Adam's misery.  
 Alive I had what fully met my will,  
 And now alas ! for drop of water sigh.  
 The little streamlets that from each green hill  
 Of Casentino down to Arno go, 65  
 And form full many a cool and pleasant rill,  
 These not in vain around me ever flow,  
 For more that vision sets my soul athirst,  
 Than the foul ill that o'er my face works woe ;  
 Stern justice, that repays my sin accurst, 70  
 The very place in which I sinned employs  
 To make me into sighs more frequent burst.  
 There is Romena, where with base alloys  
 I marred the coins the Baptist's head that bear,  
 For which I bore the fire that flesh destroys ; 75  
 But could I only see the sad soul here  
 Of Alessandro, Guido, or their kin,  
 For that sight Branda's fount I well might spare.

<sup>61</sup> Master Adam of Brescia was employed by the Counts Guido of Romena to forge Florentine money with three carats of alloy. As they were of full weight, the coins passed into general currency, but when the fraud was detected the criminal was seized by the Florentines and burnt alive on the road from Florence to Romena. The Alessandro named here is to be distinguished from his cousin of the same name, who, about 1305, was a leader of the Ghibelline exiles (*Faur.* i. p. 178 ; *Frat. O. M.* iii. p. 418).

<sup>63</sup> An obvious reproduction of *Luke* xvi. 23, 24. The special appropriateness here is that one of the chief symptoms of dropsy was, as Dante's medical studies may have taught him (see note on C. xxix. 47), an intolerable thirst, fit penalty for the insatiable love of gain.

<sup>65</sup> The two main streams that flow into the Arno from the Casentino hills are the Sieve and the Chiana, and these in their turn are fed by innumerable rivulets. Romena, the scene of Master Adam's guilt, was a village on the slope of Casentino.

<sup>74</sup> The coins of Florence had on one side the head of the Baptist as the patron saint of the city, and on the other a lily (*fiore*), whence the name "florin."

<sup>77</sup> The three brothers were sons of Guido I., Count of Romena, who was a cousin of the Guido Guerra of C. xvi. 38.

<sup>78</sup> Of the three fountains that bear the name of Branda, that of Siena, as the most famous, has commonly been identified with that of which the coiner speaks. It seems proved, however, that there was a spring so named at Romena, Master Adam's home ; and if so, it is more probable that Dante would have put in a touch of local colour, like the previous mention of Casentino, than that he named a fountain more than sixty miles distant. See Forsyth's *Italy*, p. 116 ; *Amp.* p. 269 ; *Barl. in loc.*

And one already suffers there within,  
 If the fierce shades that flit around speak true ; 80  
 But how can I my way thus limb-tied win ?  
 But were I once so lithe of limb anew  
 A single inch in fivescore years to move,  
 I would at once my course to him pursue,  
 And seek him where these dismal wretches rove, 85  
 Though full eleven miles they circle round,  
 And half a mile the road's wide, or above.  
 Through them among this evil crew I'm bound ;  
 They tempted me to coin the florins bright,  
 Wherein three carats of base dross were found." 90  
 And I: "Who are those twain in woeful plight,  
 Who smoke like wetted hand in winter's rime,  
 And lie there near thee, close upon thy right ?"  
 "When I first fell," he said, "to this drear clime,  
 I found them here, and since they have not stirred, 95  
 Nor do I think they will through endless time.  
 One against Joseph spake her lying word,  
 The other Sinon, that false Greek of Troy ;  
 From their sharp fever all this reek is poured."  
 And one of them, as if in sore annoy, 100  
 Perhaps at mention as of evil fame,  
 Did on his belly's hide his fist employ,  
 And thence a sound, as from a tabret, came ;  
 And Master Adam smote him on the-face  
 With arm whose strength seemed every whit the  
 same, 105  
 And said, "Though all my power to move one pace  
 'These my swoln limbs a very nothing make,  
 My arm is free enough for such a case."

<sup>86</sup> Another local measurement, as in C. xxix. 9 (where see note), the circumference of the tenth Bolgia being half that of the ninth. Eleven miles give the circuit of the Roman walls of Aurelian.

<sup>87</sup> The companionship of Potiphar's wife (*Gen.* xxxix. 6-23) and Sinon, the lying instrument of the plot of the Trojan horse (*Æn.* ii. 57-194), is almost a typical instance of the confluence in Dante's mind of Biblical and classical memories.

He answered: "When thou stoodest at the stake,  
 Thou hadst it not so nimble then to view; 110  
 But so, and more, when thou to coin didst take."  
 Then said the dropsied one, "Thou speakest true;  
 But thou gav'st no such truthful evidence  
 When thou at Troy wast asked the truth to show."  
 "If I spake false, thou didst false coin dispense," 115  
 Spake Sinon; "I stand here for one sole deed,  
 And thine are more than any fiend's immense."  
 "Remember, O thou perjured one, that steed,"  
 Spake he whose paunch so monstrously did swell,  
 "And fret that all the world that tale may read." 120  
 "Fret thou for tongue parched, thirst unquenchable,"  
 Then said the Greek, "and all the moisture vile,  
 Which in thy paunch before thine eyes doth dwell."  
 And then the coiner: "Wide-oped to revile 125  
 Is still thy mouth, as 'twas its wont of old;  
 For if I thirst, and swoln with humours toil,  
 Thou hast the burning pain thy head doth hold.  
 To lap Narcissus' glass thou wouldst not need  
 With many words of prompting to be told."  
 Absorbed in listening to them I gave heed, 130  
 When he, my Master, said, "Nay, do but gaze;  
 A little more and I were wroth indeed."  
 And when I heard him thus in anger raise  
 His voice, I turned to him with shame so hot,  
 That even now it thrills my mind always; 135

<sup>128</sup> This "glass," or "mirror" of Narcissus, is, of course, as in the *speculum Dianæ*, applied to Lake Nemi, a periphrase for a clear crystalline lake or pool.

<sup>131</sup> The strange dialogue of sarcasms is apparently introduced, partly, perhaps, to bring out dramatically the received dogma of the schoolmen that the sufferings of the damned were aggravated by mutual revilings; partly also, if not chiefly, for the lesson with which it ends. The poet had known in others, perhaps in himself, the impulse which draws men to listen to a quarrel in which they have no concern. Foul words, hateful passions, have a fascination, such, *e.g.*, as the realistic school of French novels or the police reports of a great crime have over their readers. He wishes, as from a personal experience, to protest against that fascination. The higher human culture personified in Virgil and the illumined conscience alike forbid it. In

And e'en as one who dreams of evil lot,  
 And in his dream that it were dream doth seek,  
 So that what is he craves as though 'twere not,  
 So then was I, and lost my power to speak:  
 I sought excuse, and my excuse I found, 140  
 Yet knew it not in that confusion weak.  
 "Less shame would cleanse, though guilt did more  
 abound,"  
 So said my Master, "than thy fault hath been;  
 Cast then thy weight of sorrow to the ground.  
 Bethink thee well that I am near thee seen, 145  
 If e'er thy fortune thee again should place  
 Where such men rail in quarrel low and mean:  
 To wish to hear that marks a nature base."

## CANTO XXXI

*The Giants in the Darkness—Ephialtes—Antæas—Journey to  
the Abyss*

THE self-same tongue whose edge first made me feel  
 Each flushing cheek to glow with crimson o'er,  
 Then brought its ministering balm to heal:  
 So have I heard the spear Achilles bore,  
 His father's erst, the cause was wont to be 5  
 Of pain at first and then of bounty more.  
 We turned our back on that vale sad to sec,  
 Upon the bank that girds it all around,  
 And, as we onward went, no word spake we.

the confusion of shame, as in a nightmare dream of evil, he turns to his Master, and the shame is accepted as a sufficient token of contrition, and the history ends with the moral condensed into a maxim.

<sup>5</sup> Telephus, son of Hercules and king of Mysia, who was wounded by the spear of Achilles, was healed by a plaster made of the rust of the spear (Ovid, *Met.* xiii. 17). Other works of the same poet allude to the story (*Trist.* v. 2; *Rem. Am.* 47).

There less than night and less than day we found, 10  
So that my forward vision had short course;  
But soon I heard a trump of shrillest sound,  
It would have made all thunder-peals seem hoarse,  
Which, as it tracked its pathway back again,  
Drew my eyes' eager gaze to seek its source: 15  
After that dolorous rout when Charlemagne  
His hopes of high emprise dispersed did see,  
Not half so dread Orlando's loud refrain.  
Awhile I turned my head there wistfully,  
And seemed to look on many a lofty tower; 20  
Then I: "Say, Master, what this land may be?"  
And he to me: "Because thine eye doth scour  
Through the thick dark at distance too remote,  
It chances thou'rt misled by fancy's power.  
Should'st thou arrive there, thou wilt clearly note 25  
How much thy sense by distance is beguiled;  
Wherefore ply thou the spur for speed more hot."  
And then my hands he clasped, benignly mild,  
And said, "Before our steps pass onward far,  
That the true fact may seem less strangely wild, 30  
Know thou those forms not towers, but giants are;  
And in the pit, around the bank hard by,  
From navel downwards one and all appear."  
As when the morning mist doth melt and fly,  
Little by little doth the sight discern 35  
What the dense fog doth hide from keenest eye,  
So piercing through the thick air's gloom forlorn,  
And winding ever nearer to the shore,  
My error fled and terror took its turn;

<sup>9</sup> The silence is eminently characteristic. Common talk does not lightly follow on the intercourse between penitent and confessor.

<sup>12</sup> The trump is that of the roar of Nimrod in his rage.

<sup>16</sup> The "dolorous rout" is that of Roncesvalles, in which the knights of Charlemagne were defeated by the Saracens, as in the *Gesta Francorum*. The paladins were slain, but Orlando, the Roland of the *Jabliaux*, blew a blast on his trumpet so loud and shrill that it reached the ears of Charlemagne,

For even as by ramparts, circling o'er 40  
     With lofty towers, is Montereccion crowned,  
     So there the rim which round the dark pit bore  
 Those fearful giants did, as towers, surround  
     With half their bodies: these Jove threatens yet 45  
     From his high heaven when his thunders sound.  
 My gaze the form of one already met,  
     Shoulders and breasts and of the belly part,  
     And both his arms a-down his sides were set.  
 Nature, in truth, when she forsook the art  
     Of making creatures such as these, did well 50  
     To bid such ministers from Mars depart;  
 And if for elephants and whales that dwell  
     On earth she grieves not, to the thoughtful she  
     Will seem to act with juster, subtler spell;  
 For where the mind's clear faculty to see 55  
     With evil will and vigour doth combine,  
     No bulwark can from them a people free.  
 His face as long and vast as is the pine  
     That bears at Rome St. Peter's name, appeared;  
     And other limbs were framed in fit design, 60

and brought him, though not to the rescue, yet to the work of vengeance (Turpin, *Cron.* c. 24, in *Scart.*).

<sup>41</sup> Montereccion, a strong castle built on a conical hill six miles from Siena in 1213, and protected by twelve towers on its walls. Such, seen through the dim gloom of mist or twilight, had appeared the forms of the giants.

<sup>45</sup> Another reminiscence of the rout of Phlegra, as in *C.* xiv. 58. Every thunder-roll the giants hear in Hell reminds them of that fatal day.

<sup>49</sup> The Biblical history of the giants of *Gen.* vi. 4 is not noticed by Dante. He confines himself entirely to those of classical mythology, in which they appeared as the Titans, sons of the Earth-Goddess, perhaps with a reminiscence of the "*Nec de te Natura, queror,*" of *Lucan*, ix. 855.

<sup>51</sup> The poet's mind seems to have dwelt on the dread possibilities of war had such monsters continued to exist. Elephants and whales are big enough, but are not destructive, and therefore Nature continues to produce them without repenting of her work.

<sup>55</sup> In the evil strength of the giants Dante sees the type of a yet greater evil. What nation could hold out against the combination of intellect and power in which there was no fear of God?

<sup>59</sup> The history of the pine is curious enough. It is first known to have found a place in the mausoleum of Hadrian i.e., the Castle of S. Angelo). In 498 it was placed by Pope Symmachus on the top of a metal structure



So that the bank which did as apron gird  
 His middle downwards, showed so much above,  
 That to reach up to either hair or beard,  
 Three Frisians would their vauntings idle prove,  
 For measured down I saw full thirty palm 65  
 From where a man to clasp his cloak doth love.  
 "*Raphel, mai amech izabi a' alm,*"  
 The haughty mouth began aloud to cry,  
 To which unmeet were any sweeter psalm.  
 "O witless spirit, still thy trumpet ply," 70  
 Then said my guide, "and show thy mind, with that,  
 When wrath or other passion thee doth try;  
 Search round thy neck, and thou the band shalt find  
 Which keeps it fast, O blind soul and confused,  
 And see where it thy mighty breast doth bind." 75  
 Then said he, "By himself is he accused:  
 Nimrod is this, through whose intent of ill  
 One language in the world no more is used.  
 Let us leave him, nor speak all vainly still,  
 For every language to him, as his own 80  
 To others, is incomprehensible."

which he had erected over a fountain placed in the atrium of the Vatican by his predecessor Damasus (366). When the present St. Peter's was built, the bronze pine was removed to the Belvedere Garden. Its actual height is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and this would give about 54 feet for the height of the giants.

<sup>64</sup> Dante may have seen Frieslanders either in the travels which took him to Cologne and Bruges or among the German troops of the Empire.

<sup>65</sup> One notes, as before, the numerical preciseness. Thirty palms (there were, however, four kinds of palms in Italy) would give about 15 feet from the neck to the middle of the body.

<sup>67</sup> It seems idle to seek for a meaning in what is intended to represent the confusion of Babel. Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, have, however, been "forced to bend," and volumes have been written by linguists with a zeal not according to knowledge. I refer readers to the elaborate *excursus* in *Scart.*, and content myself with giving the three that comes nearest to an intelligible meaning. (1) Flugel. "A pit has received my glory. See here my world." (2) Venturi. "By God, why are they in this pit? Hide thyself." (3) Anon. "Let be, O God; why scatter my hosts in my own world?" It may be noted, however, that Manuel, the great Oriental scholar of the 14th century, was a friend of Dante's (*Scart.*), and that the scattered fragments of Semitic knowledge, and some faint echoes of Hebrew speech like this and *Par. vii. 1-3*, in the *Comm.* may have been derived from him *Comp. Witt. D. F. ii. 41.*

Then we in farther journey travelled on,  
 Turned to the left, and, bowshot's space within,  
 Another found, more fierce and overgrown.  
 Who to bind him such skill of art could win 85  
 I know not, but his right arm bound behind  
 He held, the other arm in front was seen;  
 The chains, which downward hung, his limbs confined,  
 So from the neck down all the part exposed  
 That five full spirals round him were entwined. 90  
 "This haughty one to try his strength proposed,"  
 Then said my guide, "against almighty Jove,  
 And for requital he's in bonds enclosed;  
 His name is Ephialtes; he did prove 95  
 His might, when giants caused the gods to fear;  
 The arms then raised he never more may move."  
 Then I to him: "If possible it were,  
 I fain would wish Briareus, vast in size,  
 Before mine eyes might stand in vision clear."  
 He answered: "Lo! Antæus meets thine eyes 100  
 Hard by, for he can speak and is set free,  
 To bear us where the abyss of evil lies;  
 Much farther on is he thou fain would'st see,  
 And he in manner like to this is bound,  
 Save that his looks show more ferocity." 105

<sup>85</sup> We are reminded of C. xv. 12. What ministering workers had been employed by the Supreme Will?

<sup>92</sup> "Almighty (*summo*) Jove" seems here to fall in with the classical mythology of the scene; but it must be remembered that in *Purg.* vi. 118 Dante applies the same epithet to the Crucified One. Possibly his knowledge of the Hebrew name, which we commonly write "Jehovah," may have facilitated the transfer.

<sup>94</sup> Ephialtes, son of Neptune, one of the leaders of the revolt of the giants against Jupiter when they heaped Pelion upon Ossa. See *Hom. Il.* v. 385, *Od.* xi. 304; *Hor. Od.* iii. 2, 54; *Lucan.* iv. 590-605.

<sup>98</sup> Comp. the description of Briareus of the hundred arms, son of Uranus and Terra, in *Æn.* v. 564-567, and *Stat. Theb.* ii. 595, 596.

<sup>100</sup> Antæus, son of Neptune and Terra, a giant with sixty arms, slain by Hercules (*Apollod.* ii. 5, 11). He, born after the revolt, had not been one of the rebels against Jupiter (l. 120).

<sup>103</sup> *Lucan's Briareus ferox* (iv. 556) was probably in Dante's mind.

Never was earthquake so tempestuous found  
 A tower with such great violence to shake,  
 As Ephialtes shook himself; more ground  
 Had I than ever, fearing death, to quake;  
 And nothing more was needed than this dread, 110  
 Had I not seen how bonds his strength did break.  
 Then onward farther were our footsteps led,  
 And to Antæus came, who full five ell  
 Rose from the pit, not counting in his head.  
 "O thou, who in the fateful vale didst dwell 115  
 Which made of Scipio heir of glorious fame,  
 When Hannibal's great host before him fell,  
 And thousand lions as thy spoil didst claim,  
 And who, hadst thou been in the war of might  
 With those thy kin, some deem that through the  
 same 120  
 Earth's sons had had the power to win the fight;  
 Take thou us down, nor grieve that task to ply,  
 Where, o'er Cocytus, cold asserts her right,  
 To Tityus, Typho bid us not to fly;  
 This man can give what here your longings  
 seek; 125  
 Stoop down, nor curl thy lip so haughtily.  
 He in the world can yet thy glory speak,  
 For he still lives, and hopes for length of days,  
 Unless God's grace his life shall sooner take."

113 The "ell," like the "palm" of l. 65, was a varying measure. Probably here we have that of Flanders, which was about four and a half feet. This would make Antæus about the same height as Nimrod.

116 A reminiscence of Lucan (iv. 590-605), who describes the cave of Antæus as at Bagrađa near Zama, which was the scene of Scipio's victory over Hannibal, and speaks of his banqueting on lions.

124 More classical reminiscences. For Tityus see *Æn.* vi. 594; Ovid, *Met.* iv. 457; Lucan, l. c. For Typhæus, smitten with the thunderbolt of Jupiter and buried in Sicily (*Par.* viii. 70; Ovid, *Met.* v. 348), near Pelorus.

125 Even the giants are represented as still caring for fame. Dante, conscious of his own power, promises, through Virgil, that he will make the name of Antæus more widely known than Ovid or Lucan had done. *Comp.* C. vi. 89, xiii. 76, xv. 119. In C. xxxii. 94 we shall find those in whom the desire is quenched and who would fain be forgotten.

So spake the Master. Nor made he delays, 130  
 But with the hand he did my Leader grasp  
 That once filled Hercules with sore amaze.  
 And Virgil, when he felt the giant's clasp,  
 Said to me, "Come thou near, that I take thee," 135  
 And then himself and me in one did hasp.  
 And as to eyes that Carisenda see,  
 Beneath its sloping tower, when comes a cloud,  
 It seems to bend with motion contrary,  
 So did Antæus seem to me, who, bowed 140  
 In eager gaze, did look to see him bend,  
 And half to go by other way had vowed.  
 But in the pit full swift our course did end  
 Which Lucifer with Judas doth devour;  
 Nor paused he, thus bowed down, to reascend, 145  
 But rose, as mast in gallant ship doth tower.

## CANTO XXXII

*The Tenth Circle—The Lake of Ice—Caina—Traitors to their  
 Kin—Antenora—Traitors to their Country*

IF I had rhymes as out of tune and harsh  
 As would be fitting for that drear abyss,  
 Which, as their centre, th' other rocks o'erarch,  
 To press thought's grape-juice I were not remiss  
 More fully. Since by me they're not possessed, 5  
 Not without fear I come to speak of this.

<sup>135</sup> The Carisenda, or Garisenda (so called from the name of its builders) is the leaning tower of Bologna. As it was partly destroyed by Giovanni Visconti in 1355 (hence its later name of *Torre mozza*), it was probably much higher when Dante used to stand and watch the motion of the clouds as they passed over it.

<sup>145</sup> The simile is reproduced by Milton (*P. L.* i. 293).

<sup>2</sup> The last, the frozen deep of Hell, is divided into four concentric circles—Caina, for the traitors against their kindred (l. 16-72); Antenora, for those against their country (l. 73); Ptolomæa, for those against their friends (C. xxxiii. 91-157); Giudecca, for those against their benefactors. The hardness

No theme it is for one to touch in jest,  
 To paint the abyss of all the universe,  
 Nor speech that "Mamma," "Babbo" shall suggest;  
 But may those Ladies now assist my verse,<sup>10</sup>  
 Who helped, of yore, Amphion Thebes to rear,  
 That speech and fact may not be too diverse!  
 O race above all others cursèd there,  
 Dwelling in clime whereof 'tis hard to tell,  
 Better on earth ye sheep or wild-goats were!<sup>15</sup>  
 When we had reached the deep and darksome well,  
 Beneath the giant's feet, but far more low,  
 While still my gaze upon the high wall fell,  
 I heard a voice, "Take heed how thou dost go!  
 Look to it, lest beneath thy feet thou tread<sup>20</sup>  
 The heads of brothers worn and spent with woe."  
 Turned I thereon, and saw before me spread,  
 And at my feet, a lake exceeding cold,  
 And glass, not water, seemed there in its bed.  
 Never did veil so thick the course enfold<sup>25</sup>  
 In winter-time of Austrian Donau's track,  
 Nor doth so chilly clime the Tanais hold

and coldness which is the ultimate doom of this, the most malignant form of evil, is gradually intensified as the traitors sink lower into the ice.

<sup>8</sup> As the earth was, in the Ptolemaic system, the centre round which all other spheres revolved, its centre was that of the whole universe.

<sup>9</sup> The two words (*Babbo*=Papa) occur in *V. E.* ii. 7, as belonging to the style which is below the dignity of poetry. Here, perhaps, it is used for the Italian, in which Dante wrote, and which he describes in his *Ep. to Can Grande* as "*humilis et remissus*," the common speech of "*muliercula*." He would want, he seems to say, with a real or affected modesty, some other language, the Latin, *e.g.*, of Virgil, to do justice to the scene that now met his gaze.

<sup>11</sup> The story of Amphion was probably known to Dante through Horace, *A. P.* l. 394. The "ladies" are, of course, the Muses, who gave him the gifts of music and of song.

<sup>22</sup> The lake is that of Cocytus, the pool of wailing. *Comp. C.* xiv. 103-120.

<sup>26</sup> The descriptions may, as in other instances (*C.* ix. 112, xv. 4, xx. 65), come in part from personal knowledge, or from what had been reported by travellers. I have used Milton's *Donau* for the more modern Danube. The Tanais is the Don, which flows into the Sea of Azov. Tarnobach has been identified with Tovarnich in Slavonia, or Javornick near Adelsberg in Carniola. Pietra-pana is a mountain between Modena and Lucca. One of the embassies traditionally assigned to Dante was to the king of Hungary.

As it was there ; for should the Tambernach  
     Fall on it, or Pietra Pana's rock,  
     E'en on the edge it had not made a crack. 80  
 And as the frogs to croak are wont to flock,  
     With snout thrust forth from water, when in dream  
     The peasant maiden gleans from every shock,  
 Those hapless ghosts showed in that frozen stream,  
     Livid as far as part where shame is shown, 35  
     And gnashing teeth did like storks' clattering seem.  
 Of each the glance was ever downwards thrown,  
     From out their mouth the cold, and from the face  
     Their sorrowing heart, were all too plainly known.  
 When I around had gazed a little space, 40  
     I turned my glance towards my feet, and there  
     Saw two so close their locks did interlace.  
 "Tell me, O ye whose breasts are strained so near,"  
     Said I, "who are ye ?" And their necks they bent,  
     And when to me their faces they did rear, 45  
 Their eyes, which erst within had tears deep pent,  
     Gushed downwards through the lids, and then the  
         cold  
     Congealed the tears and stayed their free descent.  
 Never did rivet beam to beam so hold  
     Thus strongly ; whereon they, like goats that fight, 50  
     Butted, so fierce a rage their hearts controlled ;  
 And one, who had both ears lost through the might  
     Of that sharp frost, with visage downward bent,  
     Said, "Why on us dost mirror thus thy sight ?  
 If thou to know these twain art so intent, 55  
     The valley whence Bisenzio downward pours,  
     To them, as to their father Albert, went ;

<sup>32</sup> If rhymes suggested thoughts, one must admit that they could scarcely have suggested a more graceful periphrase for summer than that which here meets us.

<sup>52</sup> There is, perhaps, a latent symbolism. Those who yield to hatred lose the power of listening to the voice of reason or conscience.

<sup>57</sup> The two traitors are Napoleon and Alessandro of the Alberti family, lords of Falterona. They quarrelled about the possession of a tower in the



Both from one womb did issue, and the shores  
 Of all Caïna thou may'st search, nor find  
 Spirit more worthy of these frozen floors ; 60  
 Not he whose breast and shadow, as combined,  
 Were with one stroke transfix'd by Arthur's hand,  
 Nor yet Focaccia, nor yet he behind  
 Whose head, that shuts out all my view, I stand,  
 And Sassol Mascheroni was his name ; 65  
 Thou know'st his tale if thou'rt from Tuscan land ;  
 And lest my over-prolix speech thou blame,  
 Camicion de' Pazzi in me know ;  
 I wait Carlino, who shall clear my fame."  
 And then I saw a thousand faces low, 70  
 Livid with cold, whence o'er me shudderings  
 creep,  
 And ever will, from all pools frozen so.  
 And as we went toward the centre deep,  
 To which converges all we know of weight,  
 I shivered where the eternal shadows sleep. 75

valley of the Bisenzio, a tributary of the Arno, plotted against each other, and died by each other's hands.

<sup>61</sup> The traitor is Mordred, the son of Arthur, who rebelled against his father and was slain by him (*Morte d'Arthur*, B. xxi. c. 4, ed. 1868). The sword, in common phrase, "let daylight through him."

<sup>63</sup> The name of Focaccia carries us to the starting-point of the Bianchi and Neri parties. He belonged to the family of the "White" Cancellieri. In one narrative he is said to have assassinated his cousin Sinibaldo, of the "Black" section, in revenge for the murder of his friend Bertino ; in another, to have murdered a boy, also a cousin, who had insulted his father, but had been dismissed by him without punishment. The outrage raised a *vendetta* in Pistoia, and this spread to Florence (Benv. Ramb. in *Scart.* ; *Vill.* viii. 38).

<sup>66</sup> Sassol Mascheroni of Florence murdered the only son of an uncle that he might succeed to his estate. He was put to death by being rolled to and fro in a cask with spikes inside, after the manner of Regulus. The crime and punishment were the talk of all Tuscany. Hence l. 66.

<sup>67</sup> Alberto Camicione de' Pazzi, a family in Valdarno, murdered an uncle or cousin, Carlino, of the same family, in 1302 betrayed the castle of Piantrevigne in Valdarno to the Neri for money, and afterwards resold it to the Bianchi. His greater guilt is to make that of his brother seem small.

<sup>70</sup> Caina is left, and the pilgrims enter Antenôra, so called from the traitor through whom the Greeks took Troy.

<sup>71</sup> As in l. 8, the earth's centre is the centre of gravity for the whole universe. Here there is perhaps the symbol of the thought that all sins tend downward to that abyss.

Whether 'twere will, or fortune's chance, or fate,  
 I know not, but as o'er the heads I went,  
 My foot upon the face of one did grate.  
 Wailing he cried, "Why dost thou me torment?  
 Unless thou comest to increase the hate 80  
 Of Montaperti, why my pain augment?"  
 And I: "O Master, here, I pray thee, wait,  
 That I from out my doubt may find a way;  
 Then, as thou wilt, my haste shall not abate."  
 My Guide then stopped; and I to him did say, 85  
 Who still was raving fierce with blasphemy,  
 "Who art thou that at others rail'st away?"  
 "Nay, who art thou that thus," he made reply,  
 "Through Antenôra, smiting cheeks, dost go?  
 Wert thou alive, 'twere done too heavily." 90  
 "Alive I am," I answered him, "and so  
 May it please thee, if thou to fame aspire,  
 That I thy name in other rhymes may show."  
 And he: "Full otherwise is my desire;  
 Take thy way hence, nor longer vex my soul; 95  
 In this dark vale thy flattery doth but tire."  
 Then I put forth my hand and seized his poll,  
 And said, "Now thou thy name must needs confess,  
 Or not a single hair will I leave whole." [100  
 And he: "Though thou should'st pluck each single tress,  
 I will not show thee who I am, nor tell, [press."  
 Though thousand times thy weight my head should

<sup>81</sup> For Montaperti, see C. x. 86. The speaker is Bocca degli Abati, who traitorously cut off the hand of Jacopo de' Pazzi at the battle of Montaperti (C. x. 86), and thus contributed to the defeat of the Guelphs.

<sup>89</sup> The word "Antenôra," as applied to the circle of traitors to their country, indirectly shows how little Dante knew of Homer. In the *Iliad* (iii. 148, vii. 345) Antenor appears as a wise counsellor who urged the Trojans to give up Helen. Dante follows a later tradition (*Serv. ad Æn. i. 242*), which makes him give up the Palladium to the Greeks and open the door of the fatal horse. See also *Canz. xx.*

<sup>94</sup> We note the pregnant force of the contrast to what has hitherto been the law of man's nature, even among the lost. The love of fame, the desire to be talked of among men, survives in all the others. The traitors to their country desire eternal oblivion.

His locks already I had grasped full well,  
 And more than one good handful I had torn,  
 While he howled on, with eyes that downward fell; <sup>105</sup>  
 When one, "What ails thee, Bocca?" cried in scorn;  
 "Is't not enough thy jaws our ears should tire,  
 But thou must howl? What devil makes thee mourn?"  
 "No words of thine," I said, "do I desire,  
 Thou caitiff traitor, for, to thy foul shame, <sup>110</sup>  
 True news of thee shall men from me acquire."  
 "Away," he answered, "what thou wilt, proclaim;  
 But shroud not him, if thou return above,  
 Whose tongue was now too prompt to tell my name.  
 The silver of the French his tears doth move; <sup>115</sup>  
 'I saw him of Duera,' thou may'st say,  
 'Where guilty souls their icy torments prove.'  
 If thou art asked what others there did stay,  
 He of Beccaria standeth at thy side,  
 Whose gorget fine our Florence cut away; <sup>120</sup>  
 Gianni del Soldanier doth abide  
 With Ganellon and Tebaldell', I trow,  
 Who, while Faenza slept, her gates oped wide."

<sup>103</sup> The pitiless cruelty of the act which Dante invents, as it were, for his own glory is another note of his abhorrence of treachery as the deadliest of all crimes. See note on C. xxxiii. 117.

<sup>115</sup> The treachery of Buoso da Duera of Cremona may be briefly told. Manfred, son of Frederick II., had given him money to stop the passage of the French army which Guy de Montfort was leading against him. He took the money and did nothing with it; took money also from the French and made no resistance (*Vill.* vii. 4; *Malisp.* c. 185). To a Ghibelline who, like Dante, saw in the success of Charles of Anjou the beginning of all evils, for Italy, that act of treachery would seem especially hateful. *Comp. Kingt.* ii. 445.

<sup>119</sup> Tesauro di Beccheria of Pavia was Abbot of Vallombrosa and Legate of Alexander IV. After the expulsion of the Ghibellines in 1258, he was accused by the Guelph party, then in power, of having plotted with them against Florence, was tortured till he confessed his guilt, and then beheaded. The Pope avenged him by an interdict (*Vill.* vi. 65; *Malisp.* c. 160). Dante seems to put the Ghibelline traitor side by side with Buoso, as if to show that he is no respecter of persons, of whatever party.

<sup>121</sup> The Soldanier family belonged to the Ghibelline noblesse of Florence, but Gianni was a traitor to the cause. After the defeat of Manfred at Benevento (1266), when Guido Novello led his Ghibelline forces out of Florence, Gianni made himself master of the city, and used his power for his own advantage only.

<sup>122</sup> In Ganellone we pass from recent history to distant romance.

Already we had left him, and withdrew,  
 When in one pit I saw two frozen thrust, 125  
 So that one head as hood to th' other grew ;  
 And, as a famished man devours a crust,  
 So there the topmost one his teeth set fast,  
 Where skull with neck the juncture doth adjust ;  
 Not otherwise did Tydeus make repast 130  
 Of Menalippus' skull in his disdain,  
 Than he on scalp and what it held broke fast.  
 " O thou whose hate in bestial sign is plain,  
 Thy hate for him whom thou dost thus devour,  
 Do thou, these terms agreed, the ' why ' explain ; 135  
 That if of right thy rage on him doth pour,  
 I, knowing who ye are and what his sin,  
 May pay thee when I reach the world once more,  
 Unless my tongue lie stiff my lips within."

*Ugolino and Ruggieri—Ptolomæa—Traitors to their Friends—  
 Alberigo*

His mouth that sinner from his fierce repast  
 Uplifted then, and wiped it on the hair  
 Of that same head that he behind laid waste,

appears in the Charlemagne myths as the traitor who caused the great rout of Roncesvalles (C. xxxi. 16). Tebaldello dei Zambrasi of Faenza betrayed his city to the Bolognese, Ravennese, and others, who were besieging it under orders from Martin IV. (1281), by sending him a cast of the lock of the city gates, which enabled them to make a key that opened it (*Murat.* xiv. 1105 ; *Vill.* vii. 80).

<sup>125</sup> The position of the two as not on the same level seems to indicate that we are on the point of passing from Antenôra to Ptolomæa (C. xxxiii. 124). Ugolino was a traitor to his country, Ruggieri to his friend.

<sup>130</sup> The whole picture is reproduced from Stat. *Theb.* viii. 740-767, ix. 1-20. Tydeus was one of the Seven against Thebes ; Menalippus, a Theban whom he had killed, and whose head he outraged with the brute hatred here described.

<sup>138</sup> The payment is found (1) in the narrative which has immortalised Ugolino's name ; (2) perhaps also in the doubt of C. xxxiii. 86 as to his guilt.

<sup>1</sup> An echo from Lucan's description of Erichtho, "*Hæc ubi fata, caput,*

And then began : " Anew thou bidd'st me bear  
 The desperate sorrows on my heart that weigh, 5  
 Even in thought, while I from speech forbear ;  
 But, if my words as seed their part shall play  
 To bear the fruit of shame to him I eat,  
 My tears and words shall mingled find their way.  
 I know not who thou art, nor how thy feet 10  
 Are led below, but, as thy speech I hear,  
 Thou seem'st to me a Florentine complete.  
 Know then thou see'st Count Ugolino here,  
 And this the Archbishop Ruggieri is ;  
 Now list why such a neighbour I appear. 15

*spumantiaque ora levavit*" (vi. 719), as l. 4 is of the "*infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem*" (*Æn.* ii. 3).

<sup>7</sup> The words form a parallel to those in the story of Francesca, '*Faro come colui che piange e dice*' (C. v. 126), of which the narrative that follows is, in some sense, the counterpart.

<sup>11</sup> Linguistic commentators point to the fact that the speech of Dante in C. xxxii. 133-139 contains in the original not less than seven words which distinctly belong to the dialect of Florence.

<sup>13</sup> Pisa was conspicuously Ghibelline in its politics, and in 1274 it expelled the Visconti and Gherardeschi, who were Guelphs, to the latter of which families Ugolino belonged. They allied themselves with the other Guelphs of Tuscany, and attacked Pisa, and succeeded in securing their recall. Ugolino became master of the situation, and in 1282 was chosen as captain of the people in a war against Genoa, in which the Pisans were defeated with great loss at the battle of Meloria, and this was followed by a general league of the Guelph cities against them. Ugolino met the crisis by ceding several fortresses to Florence and expelling the Ghibellines. The way now seemed open to making himself lord of Pisa, but he was thwarted by a nephew, Anselm di Capraia, of whom he got rid by poison. Another rival appeared in the person of his grandson, Nino, judge of Gallura in Sardinia (*Purg.* viii. 53). The Ghibellines finding the Guelphs thus divided, placed themselves under the lead of Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, Archbishop of Pisa. Nino and Ugolino joined hands under the pressure of the common danger, but fresh jealousies sprung up which led Ugolino to a new coalition with Ruggieri. The former retired to a castle in the neighbourhood, the latter was driven out of Pisa. Ugolino returned to Pisa and celebrated his triumph by a grand banquet, the mirth of which was darkened by the words of a court-fool, who being asked what he thought of it all, answered that "The giver of the feast seemed to him nearer than any man in Italy to a great disaster." The disaster came through the treachery of the Archbishop, who turned the tide of popular feeling against Ugolino, and had him imprisoned on a charge of treason, with two sons and two grandsons, in a tower on the Piazza degli Anziani (July 1288). Florence rallied to the defence of its Guelph ally against the Pisan Ghibellines, and they put themselves under the command of Guido da Montefeltro (C. xxvii. 67), who arrived in Pisa in March 1289. The Pisans then took the resolve which issued in the tragedy of which Dante tells. The keys of the tower were thrown into the Arno,



That I by work of evil thoughts of his,  
 Trusting to him, was first a prisoner made,  
 And after killed, no need to tell thee this ;  
 But what before thee cannot have been laid,  
 That is, how sharp and dread my death has been, <sup>20</sup>  
 Thou now shalt hear ; then let my wrongs be weighed.  
 A little window, that hawk's-cage within,  
 Which now through me as Hunger's Tower is known  
 (And others too its gates shall enter in),  
 Through its small aperture to me had shown <sup>25</sup>  
 Full many a moon, when I dreamt ill dream true,  
 In which the future's veil aside was thrown.  
 I saw this lord and chief his prey pursue,  
 Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs on the hill  
 Which hideth Lucca from the Pisans' view, <sup>30</sup>  
 With hungry hounds well-trained, of eager will :  
 Gualandi and Lanfranchi and Sismond'  
 He had there set the foremost place to fill.  
 A little while, and sire and sons were found,  
 So seemed it, wearied out ; fangs sharp and dread <sup>35</sup>  
 Upon their flanks made many a horrid wound.

and the prisoners were left to starve to death (*Faur.* i. 491-503; *Vill.* vii 121).

<sup>19</sup> As in the story of Francesca, Dante fixes precisely on the points in the tragedy which no one knew or could know, and evolves what must have been, from the depths of his own imagination.

<sup>22</sup> "Hawk's cage," Ital. *nuda* = mews, in the old sense of the word, as the place in which hawks, eagles, &c., were kept during their moulting or "mewing" season. The tower may have been used for that purpose, but is said to have been known as the *Torre de' Gualandi* till after the tragedy, when it gained the new name of *Torre della Fame*. It has been since destroyed.

<sup>24</sup> The "others" may refer to the fact that a grandson of Ugolino's, who had been rescued by his nurse and taken to Lucca, came to Pisa when he had grown to manhood, and said that he wished to share the doom of his family. The Pisans imprisoned him in the tower, but allowed his nurse to attend him, and both were liberated by Charles IV. (see *Philath.*), or, according to another tradition, Henry VII. of Luxembourg (*Scart.*).

<sup>26</sup> The imprisonment, as shown above, had lasted eight months. The v. l. *lume* for *lune* is obviously inadmissible.

<sup>28</sup> The Italian "*maestro e donno*" may perhaps convey a sarcastic reference to *John* xiii. 13. Extremest unlikeness was emphasised by using the words that described the True Shepherd.

<sup>31</sup> The dream is haunted as by memories of treachery. On that mountain



When I awoke, ere yet the night had fled,  
 Still in their sleep I heard my children wail,  
 Who there were with me, crying out for bread.  
 Full hard art thou, if grief shall not prevail 40  
 To touch thee, thinking what my heart did cry;  
 When canst thou weep, if now to weep thou fail?  
 Already they had waked; the hour drew nigh  
 Till which they had been wont for food to wait,  
 And each one's dream brought sore perplexity. 45  
 I heard the locking of the lower gate  
 Of that dread tower, and then awhile I stared  
 In my sons' faces, speechless, desolate.  
 I wept not; all within as stone grew hard.  
 They wept, and then my Anselmuccio said, 50  
 'What ails thee, father? Why this fixed regard?'  
 And still I shed no tear, nor answer made  
 All that long day, nor yet the following night,  
 Till the next sun was o'er the world displayed;  
 And when there came a little ray of light 55  
 Into the dolorous prison, and I knew  
 My own face by four faces' piteous plight;  
 Then both my hands in anguish I gnawed through.  
 And they, who deemed that hunger did constrain  
 To eat, rose up with one accord to sue, 60

ridge (Monte San Giuliano) stood most of the fortresses which Ugolino was charged with having surrendered to the Lucchese. He is, as it were, the wolf the hunters are pursuing, and his children are the cubs. The three houses of l. 32 are those of Pisan Ghibellines who were supporters of Ruggieri.  
<sup>37</sup> The time is mentioned in connection with the prevailing belief as to the truth of morning dreams (C. xxvi. 7).

<sup>38</sup> As stated above, there were two sons, Gaddo and Uguccione, two grandsons, Nino, surnamed Brigata, son of Count Guelfo, and Anselmuccio, son of Count Lotto (*Murat.* vi. 595). Many historians, however, including a chronicle of Pisa (*Murat.* xv. 579), speak, as Dante does, of four.

<sup>39</sup> Did *Lam.* iv. 4 float before the memory of the student of Jeremiah? (C. i. 32) Here there is the added misery that the children cry for bread even in their sleep, as in l. 45 they dream of starvation, and when they wake each tells the special form which the horror has assumed. And in the midst of this there came the sound which told them that all hope was gone. So passed a day and night, and then the father saw the fierce rage of hunger in his children's faces, and knew that his own was growing to be like theirs.

And said, 'O father, less will be our pain  
 If thou eat us ; thou didst these frames array  
 With this poor flesh, now strip it off again.'  
 I calmed me then their anguish to allay ;  
 That day, and then the next, we all were dumb : <sup>65</sup>  
 Hard earth, why opened not thy depths that day ?  
 And when unto the fourth day we had come,  
 Gaddo lay stretched before my feet, and cried,  
 ' Why, father, help'st thou not ? ' and there, in  
 sum,  
 He died ; and as thou see'st me, so I eyed <sup>70</sup>  
 The three fall down, and perish one by one,  
 The fifth day and the sixth, and then I tried,  
 Already blind, to grope o'er them alone,  
 And three days called them after they were dead ;  
 Then even grief by hunger was outdone." <sup>75</sup>  
 Then, with his eyes askance, as this he said,  
 On that poor skull he gripped his teeth full well,  
 Which, like a dog's, upon the bare bone fed.

<sup>66</sup> The thought is common enough in the conscious or unconscious poetry of all ages, but with Dante there may have been a distinct echo of *Æn.* x. 673, xii. 881.

<sup>68</sup> Gaddo, the elder of the two sons.

<sup>73</sup> Here again we hesitate between seeing in the words the originating touch of the supreme artist, or an echo of the words in which Ovid (*Met.* vi. 277) describes the grief of Niobe—

*"Corporibus gelidis incumbit, et ordine nullo  
 Oscula dispensat natos suprema per omnes."*

<sup>75</sup> What has been called the "teknophagy of Ugolino" has become one of the burning questions of Dante's commentators, and volumes have been written on it. The main argument on the negative side is a scream of horror. It was too horrible for poetry, too sickening for human nature to endure. To this there seems a sufficient answer in the facts: (1) that Dante shrinks from no horror, and fathoms the very depths of human misery; (2) that like horrors have been enacted of old in the history of besieged cities (*Deut.* xxviii. 56, 57; *2 Kings* vi. 28), and that our own time has not been without a proof that cannibalism is possible even among civilised and Christian men; (3) that the suggestive reticence has a distinct parallel in that of *C.* v. 138; (4) that the description of *C.* xxxii. 125 apparently indicates such an act. On the other hand, Dante's words do not necessarily mean more than that Ugolino died not of grief but of starvation. The paraphrase of the whole story in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* shows how that passage of the *Inferno* had impressed itself on the minds of Europe. Michael Angelo and Sir Joshua Reynolds have made it memorable in art.

Ah Pisa! shame and blot of all that dwell  
 In that fair country where the *Si* doth sound; 80  
 Since neighbour states work not their vengeance fell,  
 Let Caprai' and Gorgona shift their ground,  
 And make a dam for Arno's issuing tide,  
 So that each living soul in thee be drowned!  
 For e'en if Ugolino rumour wide 85  
 Did charge with guilt of citadels betrayed,  
 Not by such torture should his sons have died,  
 Guiltless of crimes their tender age them made,  
 (O thou new Thebes!), Brigat', Uguccion,  
 And those whose names my song above hath said. 90  
 Then by the frozen pool our steps passed on,  
 Where it binds fast another people yet,  
 Not downward bent, but upward turned each one.  
 Weeping itself makes them to weep forget,  
 And grief, which finds a barrier in their eyes, 95  
 Is turned within new anguish to beget;  
 For the first tears that flow grow cluster-wise,  
 And, like a visor all of crystal made,  
 Fill all the socket whence the eyebrows rise,

<sup>79</sup> Compare the parallel imprecation on Pistoia, C. xxv. 10-12.

<sup>80</sup> Italy, as the land where *si* stood for "yes," as *oc* did in the S.W. of France (Langue d'oc), and *oil* or *oui* in Northern France (*V. E.* i. 10). The "neighbour states" were Lucca and Florence. Historians, however, saw in the disasters which fell on Pisa at the hands of Florence and Genoa the due punishment of its guilt (*Vill.* vii. 128).

<sup>82</sup> Capraia and Gorgona are two islands near the mouth of the Arno, which, seen from Pisa, seem also to close it up. Dante's wish is that they would actually form a dam, so that the river might drown the city with its pent-up waters.

<sup>86</sup> In placing Ugolino in Antenôra, Dante seems to affirm the charge. Here he speaks as if it were more or less doubtful. Three castles were said to have been betrayed to the Florentine, four to the Lucchesi (*Nap.* i. 313).

<sup>88</sup> Adolescence, the "tender age" of man's life, is reckoned in the *Conv.* iv. 24 as extending to the twenty-fifth year. Chaucer (*l. c.*) makes the *eldest* of the *three* children scarcely five; but this has no foundation, and is at variance with history.

<sup>89</sup> The parallel is found in the cruelty with which Thebes treated the children of Cadmus.

<sup>91</sup> From Antenôra we pass to Ptolomæa, where the souls are plunged deeper in the frozen pool, their faces just seen turned upwards.

<sup>97</sup> The blindness of the ice-closed eyes is obviously the symbol of the

And though, with horny numbness overlaid 100  
 Through the sharp cold, the very nerves of sense  
 Seemed all from out my countenance to fade,  
 Yet thought I that I felt a wind somewhence.  
 So I: "O Master, who this air doth move?  
 Are not all vapours banished far from hence?" 105  
 Then he to me: "Full soon thine eyes shall prove,  
 Thyself being there, the very answer true,  
 Beholding what this wind doth stir above."  
 And one of that ice-bound and wretched crew 110  
 Cried to us; "O ye spirits harsh and proud,  
 So that the lowest place is given to you,  
 Lift for me from mine eyes this icy cloud.  
 A moment let my burdened heart find vent,  
 Before my tears renew their frozen shroud."  
 Then I: "If thou upon my help are bent, 115  
 Say who thou art; unless I free thine eye,  
 May I go down this ice-pool's deep descent!"  
 Then he replied: "Fra Alberigo I,  
 Known by the fruits in evil garden bred,  
 Now date for fig is paid me where I lie." 120

induration of feeling and of conscience which the traitor's act brings with it as its natural consequence, and therefore its punishment.

105 The icy blast, which the student of Nature cannot explain on any theory of evaporation, comes, as is told in C. xxxiv. 51, from the wings of Lucifer.

113 Living men, even the souls of the lost (C. v. 140), know the relief of tears. The crowning misery of the traitors against friends is that that relief is denied them.

117 One notes the deliberate equivocation which finds its outcome in l. 149. We may perhaps, as in C. xxxii. 103, draw the lesson, not contemplated by the poet, that there is a danger lest what seems a righteous indignation against evil—the "doing well to be angry"—should lead us on to an evil like in kind to that which we condemn. Men may become false through their scorn of falsehood, cruel in their hatred of cruelty.

118 Fra Alberigo, of the house of the Manfredi of Faenza, entered the Order of the Knights Joyous (C. xxiii. 103). His cousin Manfred had struck him in a quarrel. He hid his rage at the time, pretended to forgive, and invited Manfred to a feast. When the meal was over, he cried with a loud voice, "Now for the fruit" (*Veniant fructus*), and armed men came from behind a screen and murdered Manfred and one of his sons (*Vill.* x. 27). Hence the proverb, "The fruit of Fra Alberigo," for a treacherous revenge (*Pulci. Morg. Magg.* c. 25). In l. 120 we have another proverbial equivalent of "measure for measure" in a form specially appropriate. See *Faz.* iv. 19.

"Oh!" said I to him, "now art thou too dead?"  
 And he to me : "How my poor carcase fares  
 Up in the world, all knowledge now hath fled.  
 This privilege our Ptolomæa bears,  
 That oftentimes the spirit falls below, 125  
 Ere Atropos hath plied her fatal shears.  
 And that thou may'st more willingly bid flow  
 The frozen tears, and scrape them from my face,  
 Learn that as soon as men deal treacherous blow,  
 As I have done, their frame is seized apace 130  
 By demon's power, who henceforth it doth guide,  
 Till life has measured its appointed space :  
 To such a pit as this it then doth glide ;  
 And so, perchance, his body still is seen  
 Above, whose soul is freezing at my side. 135  
 This, if thou'rt just come down, thou know'st, I  
     ween;  
 Ser Branca d'Oria he, and many a year  
 Has passed since he a prisoner here hath been."  
 "I trow," said I, "that thou deceiv'st me here,  
 For Branca d'Oria is as yet not dead ; 140  
 He eats and drinks and sleeps and clothes doth  
     wear."

<sup>121</sup> Manfred was slain in 1295 ; Alberigo was still living in 1300. Hence Dante's wonder.

<sup>123</sup> The ignorance of the lost as to what is passing in the world extends even to the state of the body which Alberigo had left behind him.

<sup>124</sup> The name is probably connected with the Ptolemy who treacherously murdered Simon, the father of Judas Maccabæus, and his sons (1 *Macc.* xvi. 11-16), rather than with the king of Egypt who slew Pompeius.

<sup>126</sup> Of the three *Parcæ* or Fates of classical mythology, Atropos was she who with her shears cut the thread of life which her sisters span.

<sup>130</sup> The thought is probably evolved from *John* xiii. 27, and may have seemed an explanation of the absolutely fiendish malignity to be seen in extreme developments of evil.

<sup>137</sup> As in l. 122, the question whether the body still lives on earth is one which the lost soul cannot answer. What he does know is that the real Branca d' Oria is at his side. The treachery referred to was Branca's murder of his father-in-law, Michael Zanche (C. xxii. 28), in order that he might get possession of his post at Logodoro. Branca d' Oria was alive in 1311 (*Dino.* c. iii. App. ; *Murat.* ix. 528), so that Dante's reproach was aimed at a man living when he wrote, perhaps even when he published, his poem. The "kinsman" was a nephew who was an accomplice in the murder.

"In moat above of Malebranche dread,"  
 Said he, "where clammy pitch doth boil alway,  
 Not yet had Michael Zanche shown his head,  
 When this man in his place left fiend to stay 145  
 In his own body, and a kinsman's too,  
 Who with him chose the traitor's part to play.  
 But hither stretch thine hand to me who sue ;  
 Open mine eyes." And I—I oped them not,  
 For to cheat him was chivalrous and true. 150  
 Ha ! ha ! ye Genoese, ye strange bad lot,  
 Ill-mannered, full of every purpose vile,  
 Why doth the world not cast you out to rot ?  
 For with Romagna's soul most steeped in guile,  
 One of yourselves, yea, such an one I found, 155  
 Whose soul now in Cocytus bathes, the while  
 He seems in flesh to live above the ground.

## CANTO XXXIV

*The Giudecca—Traitors to their Lords—Lucifer—Judas—  
 Brutus—Cassius—The Stars seen again*

" *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*, those of Hell  
 Now meet us ; wherefore look in front of thee,"  
 My Master said, "if thou canst see him well."

<sup>150</sup> See note on l. 117.

<sup>151</sup> There is no reason to think that Genoa was worse than other Italian cities, but its annals, like theirs, presented a sufficient calendar of crimes of perfidy and cruelty to justify Dante's condemnation (*Murat.* vi. 106). Possibly the poet was influenced by Virgil's words as to the Ligurian character, "*Consilio versare dolos ingressus et astu*," "*Patrias tentasti lubricus artes*" (*Æn.* xi. 704-717).

<sup>154</sup> The soul from Romagna is Fra Alberigo.

<sup>1</sup> The opening words transfer to Lucifer, as with a grim irony, one of the grandest of the Church's Passion hymns, written in the 6th century by Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers—

" *Vexilla regis prodeunt,  
 Fulget crucis mysterium,  
 Quo carne carnis conditor  
 Suspensus est patibulo.*"



As when a thick cloud floats on heavily,  
 Or when our hemisphere is wrapt in night, 5  
 A mill with wind-tossed sails far off we see,  
 So now methought like structure came to light.  
 Then from the gale I shelter sought behind  
 My Guide, for other screen was none in sight.  
 Now I was there—with fear my rhymes I find— 10  
 Where every spirit lies all covered o'er,  
 And shows like straw in crystal vase confined;  
 Some prostrate lie, some stand up evermore,  
 Some on their feet, and others on their head,  
 Some, like an arch, with head to feet turned o'er. 15  
 When just so far our steps did onward tread,  
 It pleased my Master unto me to show  
 Him who once all created beauty led.  
 He from before me moved, and left me so.  
 "Look thou on Dis," he said; "lo! here thou'rt come," 20  
 Where thou well armed with boldness needs must  
 go."  
 How icy cold I then became and numb,  
 Ask it not, Reader, for I cannot write;  
 All language would be weak that dread to sum.  
 Death was not mine, yet life had failed me quite; 25  
 Bethink thee now, if that thy wit be keen,  
 What I became of both bereaved outright.  
 The Emperor of that dolorous realm was seen,  
 From his breast upwards issuing from the ice;  
 And nearer I to giant's bulk, I ween, 30

<sup>11</sup> In the last and lowest circle, the immersion of the lost souls in the frozen lake, which we have seen in its several stages, is now complete; so complete that none are recognised, and the representatives of the Giudecca are confined to the three who are in the jaws of Lucifer.

<sup>18</sup> The sin of Lucifer, the "Son of the Morning" (Dante follows the patristic interpretation of the *Vulg.* of *Isa.* xiv. 12), was in Christian tradition that he fell, in the hour of his creation, into the sin of pride on contemplating his own ineffable beauty, and that this led to his rebellion. Comp. *Purg.* xii. 25; *Par.* xix. 47.

<sup>28</sup> The word "emperor" had been used in C. i. 124 of God. Here it is fitly used of the supreme enemy of God. Comp. *Par.* xii. 40, xxv. 41.

Than giants to his arms' great stature rise.  
 Now what the whole thou canst imagine well,  
 Which to the part is fashioned in like guise.  
 Were he as fair once as he now is fell,  
 And then against his Maker raised his head, 35  
 Well might from him proceed all woes of Hell.  
 O how it seemed to me a marvel dread  
 When on one head I saw a threefold face!  
 One looked in front, and that was fiery red;  
 The other twain close by it held their place, 40  
 Above the middle of each shoulder-blade,  
 And rose and joined beneath the crest's embrace.  
 The right a tint of yellowish-white displayed;  
 The left was such to look on as are those  
 There where Nile's waters have an outlet made. 45

<sup>31</sup> Arithmetical commentators amuse themselves with calculating the archfiend's height, starting from the pine-cone of St. Peter's in C. xxxi. 59, and arrive at the conclusion that it was about 4212 feet, more or less.

<sup>36</sup> Dante, like Milton and the teaching of Catholic theologians generally, accepts the fall of Satan, itself explained by the assumption that created perfection implied perfect freedom of will, and therefore the possibility of sin, as the explanation of all subsequent evil, moral and physical, in the history of the universe. (So Brunetto in his *Tesoretto*, c. vii.)

<sup>38</sup> Agreeing in this speculative point, Milton and Dante are divided, as by a whole heaven, in their treatment of the rebel angel. When the former spoke of the "archangel ruined," whose "form had not yet lost all its original brightness," he must have written with a full knowledge of what Dante had written before him, and his picture must therefore have been of the nature of a deliberate protest. Dante's view, it need hardly be added, is that which is embodied in the grotesque demons of mediæval art, as seen, e.g., in Orcagna's frescoes in the Campo Santo of Pisa (*Amp.* p. 234), and in S. Maria Novella at Florence (*D'Agincourt*, III. *Pl.* 119), and Giotto's in the Chapel of the Bargello (*Crowe*, i. p. 260-262), painted in 1300, which actually reproduce the picture of the three sinners in the mouth of the triple-headed Satan. The symbol is, indeed, said to have been common before Dante (*Didron, Hist. de Dieu*, in *Weg.* 609). Evil, from his standpoint, was to be represented as base and hideous, with no element of nobleness remaining. The three faces have received many different interpretations. (1) They have been taken as the symbol of a Trinity of Evil, the antithesis of the Divine attributes of power, wisdom, charity, as in C. iii. 4-6, and therefore impotence, ignorance, and hatred, or pride, envy, and impiety. (2) The three colours have been treated as representing the three parts of the world then known, Europe, Asia, and Africa (*Lomb. Phil.*, and many others), or as symbolic respectively of the three passions, anger, envy, and despair. So Milton, *P. L.*, iv. 144, who, however, eliminates the grotesque element. (3) The political school of commentators see in the red face the type of the Guelphs, whose banner was of that colour, in the black, that of

Beneath each head two outspread wings arose,  
 Large, as befitted such a bird as that ;  
 No ship at sea such monstrous canvas shows ;  
 No feathers had they, but like those of bat  
 Their fashion was, and so the pinions tossed, 50  
 That three strong blasts went forth from where he  
 sat ;

By them Cocytus was all bound in frost.  
 With his six eyes he weeps; o'er threefold chin  
 The rain of tears and bloody drivel crossed,  
 And with the teeth each misshaped mouth within, 55  
 In flax-mill wise, he crunched a sinner's frame,  
 So that three souls he tortured for their sin.  
 To him in front the bite as nought became  
 To the fierce clawing, which oft left the spine  
 Stripped bare of all the skin that from it came. 60  
 "That soul up there who pays the heaviest fine  
 Is Judas," spake my Guide, "Iscariot,  
 Whose legs without with head inside combine,  
 Of the other two, whose heads have downward got,  
 Brutus is he who in the black mouth lies— 65  
 See how he writhes, yet speaketh not a jot—

the Neri of Florence ; in the yellow, that of the *fleur-de-lys*, on the shield of France. Of the three, (1) seems most in harmony with Dante's mind.

<sup>46</sup> The six wings seem the only survival of the higher than archangelic state from which Lucifer had fallen (*Isa.* vi. 2 ; *Rev.* i v. 8).

<sup>49</sup> The bat is, perhaps, chosen as the emblem of the will that "loves darkness rather than light, because its deeds are evil."

<sup>52</sup> The explanation of the phenomenon that had perplexed Dante in *Ç.* xxxiii. 103-105.

<sup>62</sup> The combination of the three traitors is the culminating point of Dante's political system as developed in the *De Monarchiâ* (iii. 16). The Church and the Empire are, each within its own sphere, the representatives of the Divine Government. The salvation of the world, the happiness of mankind, depend on the full and righteous exercise of the powers of each within that sphere. The treachery of Judas was a sin against the Divine Head and Founder of the Church ; that of Brutus and Cassius against the divinely appointed head and founder of the Empire. All three were sinners alike against God and against humanity, sharers in the sin of Satan, their treachery being aggravated, as his was, by ingratitude towards their benefactors. The allocation of the three traitors to the three heads gives some colour to one of the ethical interpretations noted above. Judas sinned through avarice, Brutus through pride, Cassius through envy.

That other Cassius is, so gross in size.

But the night climbs, and now to take our way  
The hour hath come, for all hath met our eyes."

Then, as he pleased, upon his neck I lay, 70

And he the vantage seized of time and place,

And when the wings with room enough did play,

He laid fast hold where shaggy sides gave space,

From rock to rock descended downward then,

And 'twixt the ice and thick hair moved apace. 75

When we had reached the point where legs of men

Turn round upon the thickness of the thighs,

My Guide, with toil and eager-breathing strain,

Where his legs had been made his head uprise,

And as a climber grasped the hairy skin ; 80

So deemed I Hell once more would meet mine  
eyes.

"Keep fast thy hold, for by such stairs we win

Our way up," said my Master wearily ;

"Thus, and not else, from this vast world of sin."

Then through a rock's wide hole he passed on high, 85

And made me sit upon a margin there,

Then straightway took his cautious steps to me.

<sup>67</sup> The description of Cassius as "gross in size" is at variance with Plutarch, who speaks of him (*Brut.* 29, *Cæs.* 62), as Shakespeare does, as "lean and hungry." Possibly Dante mixed him up with L. Cassius, whom Cicero (*Catil.* iii.) describes as "fat."

<sup>68</sup> The night is that which follows Good Friday. The circuit of Hell has been made in twenty-four hours. Dante is not to spend his Easter Eve in it.

<sup>73</sup> The exit from Hell reaches the extremest point of grotesqueness. The example of Virgil at the close of *Æn.* vi., the authority of the "*Hoc opus, hic labor est*" (*Æn.* vi. 128), forbade the slow process of a reascent through all the circles that he had traversed. Virgil had cut the knot by leading Æneas through the "ivory gate" of false visions of the night (*Æn.* vi. 899). Dante, falling back on his physical geography, remembered that the centre of the earth is also the centre of gravity ; that if that were once past, there might be a way leading to the upper world again ; but that in order to be in the normal attitude of man when that passage was effected, it would be necessary to effect a somersault. When this is done, he looks from the rock, and sees, not the head, but the legs of Lucifer quivering in the air. The way by which the two pilgrims travelled is left undescribed, save that it is difficult, rough, and dark, like a cavern, and that the ascent, like the descent, was accomplished in twenty-four hours.

I raised mine eyes, and thought to see full clear,  
 As I had left him, Lucifer upright ;  
 And lo ! I saw him now his legs uprear ; 90  
 And if I then was startled at the sight,  
 Let the coarse herd conceive who do not see  
 What the point was I passed with step so light.  
 " Rise on thy feet," then said my Guide to me ;  
 " Long is the way and evil is the road, 95  
 And soon the sun in middle tierce will be."  
 It was no stately hall of king's abode,  
 There where we went, but like a natural cave,  
 Where rough the floor, and scanty light is showed.  
 " Before I tear myself from this drear grave, 100  
 My Master," said I, as I stood erect,  
 " Speak a few words from error me to save.  
 Where is the ice ? and what works this effect,  
 That he there's upside down ? How hath the sun  
 So quick from eve to morn made course direct ?" 105  
 And he to me : " Thou still art dreaming on.  
 As on the centre's other side, where I  
 My way o'er that world-piercing serpent won,  
 While I came down, on that side thou didst lie ;  
 Then, when I turned, thou didst the point pass 110  
 through  
 To which all weights from every quarter fly,  
 And 'neath the hemisphere dost now pursue  
 Thy way, which is of that the opposite,  
 Which the dry land o'erhangs, 'neath whose vault  
 slew

96 " Middle tierce " is, in the Church reckoning of the 13th century, which Dante follows (*Conv.* iv. 23), an hour and a half after sunrise, half-way to the third hour, the starting-point varying with the length of the day. Virgil speaks, it must be noted, from the point of view of the new hemisphere in which the pilgrims are now travelling. It had been night before (l. 68) ; it is now morning (l. 118), the dawn of Easter Monday.

112 In the physical geography of the 13th century it was held that, as the hemisphere then known as the abode of man was predominantly land, so the other was, with the exception of the Mountain of Purgatory, entirely of water. Jerusalem (the thought came perhaps from *Ezek.* v. 5) was the



They Him whose birth and life were sinless quite. 115  
 Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere  
 Which brings Giudecca's other face to sight ;  
 Here it is morning when 'tis evening there,  
 And he whose hair as ladder served us well  
 Is fast fixed still as he did then appear. 120  
 On this side 'twas that he from high Heaven fell,  
 And all the land that here was prominent  
 Through fear of him beneath the ocean's swell  
 Took refuge, and beneath our half-sphere went ;  
 And that which here is seen perchance forsook 125  
 Its place to flee, upgathering its extent."  
 There is, from Belzebub as far, a nook,  
 As is the deep of that vast tomb below,  
 Known by a streamlet's sound—'twere vain to  
 look—  
 Which in a hollow rock doth downward go 130  
 Through channel it has made in lapse of age,  
 Which slopes down gently as its waters flow.  
 My Guide and I then made our pilgrimage,  
 On that dark road the world of light to find,  
 And, with no care to halt at any stage, 135

centre of the land-hemisphere, and is defined as the "vault" or culminating point, where the Sinless One suffered. Lucifer fell from Heaven on the side of the water-hemisphere; the earth's contents fled before him and appeared above the waters, while the land, disturbed as he fell, rose to form the island-mountain, and left the cavernous opening through which the pilgrims now wound their way upwards, and was then chosen for the first home of man, the earthly Paradise.

127 Dante adopts the current tradition of the Church, inherited from the Jews, which identified the Beelzebub of Ekron (2 *Kings* i. 2) with the prince of the demons, and therefore with Lucifer and Satan (*Matt.* xii. 24-26).

130 The streamlet, if we care to ask questions, may probably be thought of as an outlet of the Lethe of *Purg.* xxxiii. 9. Sins remembered and retained, as in the rivers of Hell, especially Cocytus, sins forgotten and forgiven, all contribute to the everlasting cold which is the doom of their first author.

136 The duration of the journey would seem to have been, like that of the descent, twenty-four hours. It was morn in l. 105. It is morn again in *Purg.* i. 13.



We upward clomb, he first and I behind,  
So that I saw the things that beauteous are,  
By high Heaven borne, in opening round defined ;  
Thence passed once more to rebehold each star.

<sup>139</sup> It is characteristic that each division of the poem ends with the word "stars." To see them is the first joy on escaping from Hell. To mount to them is the bliss of the cleansed spirit (*Purg.* xxxiii. 146). The fulness of the beatific vision lies in the thought that the love which moves them moves also the desire and will of each individual soul (*Par.* xxxiii. 145). Many poets have written of the starry heavens. No poet has ever received their voiceless preaching more fully than Dante. We can enter into his feeling when he refused to accept his return from exile under degrading conditions, and asked, "Can I not in all places enjoy the light of the sun and of the stars?" (*Ep.* 10; *Frat. O. M.* iii. p. 500.)



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